

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



Harold A. Bosley:

Pardon My Idealism

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>Robert Seymour</i> | • | Paradox of Dust and Destiny |
| <i>John H. Marks</i> | • | Life in Terms of Covenant |
| <i>Robert W. Greene</i> | • | The Heavy Hand of God |
| <i>Eric Dean</i> | • | Unlikely Prospects |
| <i>Melvin E. Wheatley</i> | • | Brave Way to Be Scared |

JOHN E. SKOGLUND AND DAVID MATTESON

MAKING DIALOGUE PREACH

The Pulpit

Founded 1929 by Charles Clayton Morrison
as a journal of contemporary preaching.

KYLE HASELDEN, Editor

HAROLD E. FEY, *Contributing Editor*

MARTIN E. MARTY, *Contributing Editor*

MARJORIE L. BROWN, *Copy Editor*

LEONARD S. MEYER, *Business Manager*

Editorial Associates

Conrad Bergendoff, Pres., Augustana College

Oscar F. Blackwelder, Reformation Lutheran, Washington, D. C.

Harold A. Bosley, First Methodist, Evanston, Ill.

George A. Buttrick, Harvard University
Henry Hitt Crane, Pastor Emeritus, Central Methodist, Detroit

Edwin T. Dahlberg, Delmar Baptist, St. Louis

Russell V. DeLong, Pres., Pasadena Nazarene College

Theodore P. Ferris, Trinity Church, Boston

C. Willard Fetter, First E.U.B., Dayton
Jack Finegan, Pacific School of Religion
O. A. Geiseman, Grace Lutheran, River Forest, Ill.

E. S. Hjortland, United Ev. Lutheran, Oak Park, Ill.

E. G. Homrighausen, Princeton Theological Seminary

Ernest Marshall Howse, Bloor St. United Church, Toronto

William H. Hudnut, Jr., Third Presbyterian, Rochester

Gerald Kennedy, Bishop, Los Angeles Area, Methodist Church

Harold L. Lunger, Brite College of the Bible, Fort Worth

George A. Mastrantonis, St. Nicholas Eastern Orthodox, St. Louis

Benjamin E. Mays, Pres., Morehouse College

Robert J. McCracken, Riverside Church, New York

Frederick M. Meek, Old South Church, Boston

Roy Pearson, Dean, Andover Newton Theological School

Harold C. Phillips, Brown Visiting Professor of Homiletics, Union Theological Seminary, New York

James A. Pike, Episcopal Bishop of Calif., San Francisco

Liston Pope, Dean, Yale Divinity School

Edward Hughes Pruden, First Baptist, Washington, D. C.

Paul M. Robinson, Pres., Bethany Biblical Seminary

Frederick W. Schroeder, Pres., Eden Theological Seminary

Ralph W. Sockman, Christ Methodist, New York

Alan Walker, Supt., Central Methodist, Mission, Sydney, Australia

35 cents single issue.

\$4 a year in U.S.A. and Canada.

\$4.50 foreign.

Copyright © 1961 by the Christian Century Foundation. All rights reserved under the International Copyright Union, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Pan-American Copyright Convention. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.

Published monthly by the Christian Century Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. HARRISON 7-5380.

CONTENTS: AUGUST 1961

SERMONS

Pardon My Idealism	Harold A. Bosley	4
Paradox of Dust and Destiny	Robert Seymour	10
Life in Terms of Covenant	John H. Marks	13
The Heavy Hand of God	Robert W. Greene	16
The Unlikely Prospects	Eric Dean	18
The Brave Way to Be Scared	Melvin E. Wheatley	20

ARTICLES

Making Dialogue Preach

John E. Skoglund and David Matteson 8

Prophecy and Reconciliation R. Franklin Terry 24

The Preacher on Television Michael Daves 27

FEATURES

Pulpit Post	2	Poem	22
Editorial	3	Prayers	23
The Mourners Bench ...	12	Pulpit Calendar	26
Thoughts on Preaching ..	18	Book Reviews	29

PULPIT POST

Contributions Gratefully Received

SIR: As a subscriber of only two years, perhaps I have not yet been with you long enough to get a long-range view, but for myself, I find one notable lack in the Pulpit's sermons. Most of them, it seems to me, fit admirably the old saying you printed in your May issue, "If the text had the smallpox, the sermon would never catch it."

I think there is room for all types of sermons in a preacher's pulpit life, and I would be the last to say that every sermon has to have the text first and then "exegete" it. But as a rather new man in the field, I would appreciate some contemporary exegetical examples. Of the five sermons in the May issue, three didn't even have a specific text. Sermons of this type are not particularly difficult to write. What is difficult is to "exegete" a text vibrantly, truthfully and meaningfully

for our day and stick to the text, so that it is obvious to the people that it is God's message and not just our own. Can you help me?

J. FURGURSON

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
Spokane, Wash.

He Is Not Alone

SIR: Having found myself reflected so well in the words of Daniel C. Reuter ("A Young Minister's Dilemma," July issue), I am hesitant to make the following statement lest it seems too self-congratulatory: As long as there is the sort of honesty which his article reflects present among the clergy, the Church of Christ has lost neither its vitality nor its relevancy.

Thank you for printing his piece; he is not alone.

ROBERT M. COOPER

All Saints' Church
Hamlet, N. C.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXXII

AUGUST 1961

No. 8

God and the Lure of This Life's Caesars

A HABITUAL or professional reader of sermons soon discovers that there are a number of popular texts which suffer chronically from indifferent or abusive exegesis. Among such scriptural texts few stand so high or in their misuse work so much mischief as Matthew 22:21 and the paralleling passages in Mark and Luke. In Matthew the verse reads: "They said, 'Caesar's.' Then he said to them, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'" This is a perilous verse and few ministers who use it, including this one, have escaped the pitfalls which lie all about it.

Matthew 22:21 has been used to endorse patriotism, to argue the separation of church and state, to show the cleverness of Jesus in producing from the moneybag of a Jew a coin bearing the blasphemous image of Caesar. On the authority of this verse men have equated state and church, the common law and the divine law, magistrates and God. This verse is a proof text for those who champion the conscripting of youth for military service and for those who condemn the conscientious objector. It is a handy argument in dividing politics from religion and religion from politics. It is used to argue the religious as well as the civil obligation to pay taxes. What elasticity there is in this verse, what dexterity it inspires in those who use it, and what deviltries it produces in its distortions!

It is not enough to say that this verse is theocentric, although it is. It is not enough to say that the accent must come down hard on the word "God," even though it must. This is so because the theocentricity of the verse will lose its radical quality if the offending first clause is disregarded. The first clause — the one that causes the difficulty — is there and cannot be so easily dismissed. What then did Jesus mean when he said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." The grammatical structure of this scripture tells us that the word "therefore" refers to the coin, to Caesar's image and inscription on it and to the possession of such a coin by a Jew. Beneath the surface of this event there must be a large, complicated and explanatory history and

only in the light of that history can this text become a teaching.

In a little book called, *Toward the Understanding of Jesus*, written forty years ago by Prof. Simkhovitch, there is an instructive account of the background to this event in the life of Jesus. After tracing the developing relationship between the Jews and Rome, Simkhovitch offered the following summary:

"Several years before the birth of Christ the Jews petitioned Rome for annexation to the Roman province of Syria, which petition Rome at that time rejected. The petitioners preferred to lose their quasi-political independence under a Herodian prince for the sake of maintaining their religious traditions, for the sake of securing a cultural home-rule under a Roman procurator. The fifty Jewish ambassadors and the eight thousand Jews in the city of Rome who petitioned the Emperor were meeting a practical situation. This situation forced them to discount political independence altogether, and hence all that was left to save and safeguard was what had maintained them as a cultural entity throughout the ages — the traditional faith of their fathers."*

In using this text it is an error — if Simkhovitch is correct — to let the word "Caesar" serve as a synonym for the kind of state we know — a free and democratic state. Here "Caesar" is a synonym for tyrants. It is an error to refer to the relationship of Jews and Rome as though it were the relationship of free citizens to their own country. Here the Jews represent a politically subdued people. It is as though Jesus were saying to the Pharisees, "You bought a tyrant. As long as you use his protection for your interests, his coin for your traffic, you must pay him." This verse then becomes an instruction not about the relationship of a citizen to his country but about the relationship of subjects to tyrants. The coin with Caesar's image and inscription on it was the evidence of a profitable surrender and as such it was indisputable proof that its possessor owed obligations to Caesar which diminished allegiance to God. (There is no small significance in the fact that Jesus had to borrow a coin to make his point.) What was lamentable was not the paying of taxes but the surrender which made such taxes legitimate and obligatory.

In the light of this background must we not bring this text to life amid our people, not by

(Continued on page 19)

* Vladimir G. Simkhovitch, *Toward the Understanding of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan). Used by permission.

Pardon My Idealism

By Harold A. Bosley

Matthew 5:3-16.

THE TITLE of this sermon was lifted from a letter written to me by one of the hundred or more young people of our church who have been in college or university work this year. I confess to a selfish reason for keeping up a general correspondence with them. I find myself indebted to them for the lucidity of their insights, the genuine agony of spirit with which they face their future, and, above all, for their dogged, if confused, determination both to be honest on all matters and try to stay this sad old world from her pell-mell dash to disaster. The phrase "Pardon my idealism" was gleaned from a letter of one who, after confessing his own confusion, wrote, "Pardon my idealism, but . . ." then went on to state the main issues of our day as he saw them and to indicate the directions he thought we ought to take in regard to them.

That introductory phrase struck fire all around the perimeter of my thought. Why should anyone, least of all a young person, feel apologetic about being idealistic? It would be easier to understand it if he had said, "Pardon my pessimism" or "Pardon my materialism," but why "Pardon my idealism"?

Yet he is far from alone in his hesitant affirmation of idealism. In fact, I should say that one of the outstanding characteristics of the last forty years has been the compromising, if not the actual ditching, of the great ideals of the religious and cultural heritage of our civilization. To say that the way of the idealist is hard today is to put it mildly. It ignores the fact that this has always been so — and probably will continue to be.

Yet our hesitation in affirming idealism ought to be a matter of primary concern in a day like this when the battle of ultimates is being joined in

dead earnest. And we will be forced to take sides in the struggle.

To paraphrase Robert Frost's poem, "Mending Wall," something there is in contemporary events that doesn't like a spectator — at least we find it increasingly difficult to pose as one. And I cannot help hoping we will find it just as hard to be content with the little things of life when the great issues keep breaking over us.

You may find some comfort, as I do, in a story which came out of Belgium many years ago. A certain old church engaged an artist to brighten up and repair the lovely artwork which had become a little faded with the years. He completed the job and sent in a bill for \$67.30 — which the good folks thought a bit steep, so they asked him to itemize it, and he did. On the complete list were items like these: "For correcting the Ten Commandments, \$5.12; for renewing heaven and adjusting the stars, \$7.14; for touching up Purgatory and restoring lost souls, \$3.06; for brightening up the flames of Hell and doing odd jobs for the damned, \$7.17."

I mention this because some of you may be of the opinion that the world is in such a state that about all you can hope to do are some "odd jobs for the damned." It is all right for the artist to approach his job this way, but it will not do for the rest of us. And let us not give up too easily on the tasks that lie ahead of us. Above all, let us not begin with a dark and bitter attitude about them. Tennyson lifted a wise word of warning about this when he had one of his young men cry:

Ah what shall I be at fifty
Should nature keep me alive
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?

But unless you are going to be content with "some odd jobs for the damned," you will want to address yourself to the great issues of our day. And I know of none more pressing and more relevant than whether the democratic way of life will be able to survive the challenges directed against it both from within and without in the contemporary world. Leaving to others who are more competent than I a study of the specific problems confronting democratic institutions, I invite your attention

HAROLD A. BOSLEY, minister of First Methodist Church, Evanston, Illinois since September 1950, is an editorial associate of *The Pulpit*. Former dean of the Divinity School at Duke University and frequent lecturer at other seminaries, Dr. Bosley is the author of numerous religious books and articles. This sermon was delivered at the Garrett Biblical Institute baccalaureate service on June 15, 1958.

o the most sadly neglected factor in our thought about the problems and the future of democracy just now, namely, the relationship between religious faith and democratic ideals.

Both religion and democracy are decidedly on the defensive today. Religion has been having a hard fight of it with one foe or another for the past two hundred years. But the testing days of democracy as a form of government, a kind of culture and society, a way of life, are of more recent date, beginning in dead earnest in 1917 with the Russian Revolution. During the intervening years we have seen "democracy" become a catchword for an increasing number of totalitarian schemes all over the world. It is clear enough that the forces of collectivism are gaining headway in nearly every area of life, and as they do, they force a reappraisal and usually a severe curtailment of democracy — a process which will continue unless faith in democracy can be rejuvenated and many of its basic ideals and practices restored to grace and good favor among thoughtful peoples.

Believing as I profoundly do both in the Christian faith as the true view of life and in democracy as that form of society best fitted for the Christian view to mature in, I am concerned to indicate those points at which Christianity can contribute something essential to the survival and enrichment of democracy.

I do not see how anyone can doubt that the paramount social and political problem before us today can be phrased in some such fashion as this: "Can democracy survive?" Therefore, the problem we must confront just now is this: "Can Christianity help democracy meet the various challenges being leveled against it? Can Christianity furnish a fertile soil of positive faith in God, in man, in history, and in the future which is essential to the survival of the democratic ideal?"

These are serious questions and deserve more time and much more wisdom than we can hope to bring to bear upon them now, but they are too momentous to be ignored. Here as in many other areas of life the wrong answer is better than no answer at all since it manifests at least an awareness of the importance of the question and the determination to try to find an answer to it.

Democracy can be defined many ways. I do not suppose we need pause long over Carlyle's definition of democracy: "the plurality of blockheads." I am certain Abraham Lincoln's famous phrase is a better working definition: "The government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

But Lincoln's conception of democracy has had hard sledding in history. To begin with, it has seldom been tried and when it has the results have not been entirely encouraging. Democracy in Periclean Greece lived with a measure of effectiveness for a hundred years, but it finally

weakened and fell because it was unable to manage the vices that arose within it. It was irremediably weakened by internal enemies before it succumbed to the external ones.

As Will Durant tells this sobering story, he gives it the fitting title, "The Suicide of Greece." He tells how a spirit of profound provincialism had pervaded the city-states; it was each one for itself with little or no thought of a common good. They lost all notion, if they ever had it, that they were bound together in a common destiny. Greed for goods and lust for power pushed the stronger cities, notably Athens and Sparta, in the direction of empire and brought them into inevitable collision with each other. Prosperity brought moral corruption and spiritual decadence, as it always does. Rivalry between the most powerful states was inevitable, and soon the forces of Athens and Sparta were opening the veins of one of the richest civilizations ever to grace this earth. It is impossible to improve upon Dr. Durant's terse summary: "The death of Greek democracy was both a violent and a natural death, in which the fatal agents were the organic disorders of the system; the sword of Macedon merely added the final blow."

Unfortunately, democracy seems to be in a similar predicament today. After having been in operation to some extent in the Western world for several hundred years, it is now fighting for its very life against doubts and vices within and deadly foes without. Why is it that democracy has so much trouble if it is based upon a true appraisal of human capacities?

One of the few philosopher-statesmen of our day, Dr. T. V. Smith, once laid bare the heart of the democratic problem with the penetrating observation, "That men will live for private gain we know; that they will die for public ends we know; but whether average men in the continuous long run will work efficiently for public ends we do not know." Nor is Dr. Smith alone in this doubt. Some of the most disciplined minds the human race has ever produced, including Plato, Machiavelli, and Thomas Hobbes, are sure that we cannot count on the average man's willingness to do those things that are essential to democracy.

Who, then, does believe that man is capable of democracy?

As I understand it, there are two groups of thinkers who have some confidence in the democratic potential in people like us — one the secularist, and the other the religionist. A secularist is one who does not believe religion has anything of very great significance to offer toward solving the problems of life. He believes we may be able to develop a civilization on the minimum basis of "live and let live." He argues that with this beginning we will be able to build up a culture in which we can learn to respect each other's rights.

Not because we love each other! Not at all! But because we know that this is the law of survival: I shall respect your rights not because I like you but because I want you to respect mine. The secularist believes we can build a powerful social ethic on this basis, the ethic of "one for all and all for one." He is convinced that no matter how selfish an individual may be, he will learn the lesson that he is bound up with the group and must live with that group in such a way as to enable it to survive if he is to survive. But, through it all, he will continue to be a decided individual even though he is willing to recognize the fact that his individuality must combine somehow or other with the social welfare. Yet basically he is always self-centered and self-seeking. The modern ad men must have had him in mind when they coined the phrase we see on the billboards: "Be careful how you drive; the life you save may be your own."

All of this looks plausible enough, but it suffers from a fatal weakness. It overlooks what Anselm called "the gravity of sin," the profound weakness of human nature.

We must begin our thinking about man and his capacities with the hard facts of greed, passion, and prejudice. We do not begin with greed, for example, as a fact to be discovered and faced in the future; we begin with it as a fact now, as an active factor in our own daily living and thinking. We do not consciously will and choose to be prejudiced; we begin our conscious life by being prejudiced. We do not suddenly come to maturity, look about us and say we are against this or that minority group for this or that reason. From earliest infancy, we have breathed in the prejudices which mold the patterns of our mature mind. There is no point at which we begin consciously to be prejudiced against the Negro, for example. There is, however, a point in our life when we consciously recognize that prejudice for the blight that it is. Why, then, do we cherish it?

The answer is hard and simple: We cherish this prejudice because it ministers to our desire for status, esteem, honor, and privilege. We like to regard persons as less than we are because we thus feel greater than we actually are. We like to have people weaker than we are because we feel stronger than we actually are. We like to have people work for us and serve us because it gives us an illusion of pride and mastery. Therefore, we continue feeding prejudice because it ministers to that rapacious self-esteem called pride which knows it cannot stand up to the criticism of reason and conscience.

These, then — pride, greed, prejudice, ignorance — are the basic spiritual problems of democracy. The secularist has no answer to them. They cannot be solved simply by overthrowing this or that political and military power which may challenge us at any given moment, however

dangerous that challenge may be. No matter how many external enemies we conquer, these basic internal problems will persist. Is it going to be possible for us to grapple effectively with them? If not, every attempt at democracy will die in the throes of a revolution that leads toward some tyranny or other.

I am convinced that the Christian religion has the courage to look at these basic problems squarely, and having looked at them, retain faith in God and in man. The secularist may say: "Give us time; these problems will work themselves out." But the facts are against this. They did not work themselves out in any previous civilization. And they had hundreds of years in which to do it! All such civilizations went down pleading for the time they did not have — and they have had more time than we can ever hope to have. They, too, thought that somehow or other their problems would solve themselves if only given enough time. Problems like these never solve themselves. They but grow worse if time is the only unguent applied. Even so, the sands of time have about run out in the hourglass of our civilization. The one thing we do not have is *time*.

The Christian faith has a long acquaintance with these spiritual problems of greed, pride, prejudice, and selfish individualism. From bitter experience we know that a man must struggle from the very beginning of his life against this heritage. The Christian faith with full realism says in no uncertain terms that these sins can be conquered by faith in a God of love whose love is strong enough to overcome any evil, a God near to each man; a God seen in Jesus Christ. The individual must submit to God's will and can do so with such completeness that his reason and conscience will be able to curb and control, even though they may never eradicate, the sins of greed, pride, and prejudice. Human reason and conscience are, therefore, the gifts of God to us, gifts whereby we may think his thoughts after him, whereby we are able to seek to order our life after his will for us as we see it in Jesus Christ. Such gifts remind us that it is never wholly accurate to say, "God has spoken." The truth of the matter is that God not only has spoken but is continuing to speak to those who are willing to hear. The fact of God, therefore, is the bedrock upon which the Christian faith bases its confidence in man, in democracy, and in the future.

In answer to the question, "Are we capable of democracy?" the Christian faith answers, "With God's help, yes. We are capable of fashioning a society of the people, by the people, and for the people which shall not perish from this earth. It is possible for us to do this under the guidance of God and in obedience to his will as we see it in Jesus Christ and find it in the Christian fellowship. Through this discipline we can learn to live in

such fashion that love for each other and for God will create of us a family, recognizing the fact that another has a claim upon our concern and co-operation, not simply as a citizen but as a brother in Christ."

When we realize that democracy cannot survive without a rebirth of Christian idealism incarnate in lives like our own, we will not be inclined to say, "Pardon my idealism." You might expect a preacher like myself to say this, but I am far from being alone. In fact I find myself in company with an increasing number of men from all walks of life.

When William Faulkner was given the Nobel Prize for literature, he said, in part, that he denounced the pessimistic estimate of man so common these days. "I refuse to accept it. I believe that man will not merely endure, he will prevail. He is immortal because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion, and sacrifice and endurance."

Two statements by Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the most sensitive and courageous thinkers of our time, have etched themselves in my memory and I give them to you for your consideration. Upon returning from Europe in 1948, he warned us, "We shall never again know the meaning of security." Recently, when asked what we could do in the face of the complexities of our day, he answered, "We can help because we can love one another."

The days we face are so difficult that even Bertrand Russell has been caught eyeing the sawdust trail. Speaking in New York City in 1950 he said:

The root of the matter is a very simple and old-fashioned thing, a thing so simple that I am almost ashamed to mention it, for fear of the derisive smile with which wise cynics will greet my words. The thing I mean — please forgive me for mentioning it — is love, Christian love, or compassion. If you feel this, you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty

There is reason to believe that religion can and will pour courage and foresight into the flagging democratic ideal and do so by cherishing and cultivating the ideals that are as essential to democracy as to religion. It is clear that religion and democracy must either hinder or help each other since they work on the same person at the same time, but with this difference: They work on different levels of that person's life and thought.

Their vital relationship might be pictured this way: They are never identical with each other; at best their efforts parallel each other in principle on almost all issues. But they form a horizontal rather than a vertical parallel in the life of any given person. Religion is the deeper line of the parallel, dealing with the universal implications of these ideals for thought and life. Democracy is the upper line of the parallel, dealing with the

responsibility of the person to a particular segment of life and society of which he is a part. Obviously if religion is successful as it works at the lower and more universal level, democracy is strengthened. If democracy is successful as it works at the upper level, inevitably the significance of religion in human life is enlarged. If democracy fails at the upper level, religion is weakened and hindered, but does not necessarily fall, though if religion should fail at the lower level, democracy necessarily falls.

Therefore, before we feel apologetic about our religious idealism, let us remember that the Christian faith makes three indispensable contributions to the survival and the enrichment of democracy. First, it teaches us who we are. We are the children of God. It strives to transform us until we become fit citizens of a social order dedicated to the ideal of the brotherhood of man in the family of God. (2) It bids us strive for a social order which nurtures the life of all in the direction of a commonwealth of values in which all men freely share. (3) It stands at the side of democracy nourishing and cherishing not alone a profound religious faith, but interpreting this faith in terms of man and his social relationships.

The Christian faith, therefore, stands far beyond the forms of democracy as we now know and enjoy it, and says, "Come on up higher." It beckons to us, bogged down as we are in the racial antagonisms, the injustices, and the other evils of our day, and says, "These must be conquered if we would live. They will not correct themselves, but God has entrusted you with both the duty and the power to master them before they master you." Men in particular, mankind in general, and our own nation in a special way, are under the judgment of God, knowing that only in that context and relationship can we hope to achieve a higher form of democracy than we have ever known heretofore.

I shall not be telling you anything new if I make two predictions: (1) The next twenty-five years are certain to be the roughest part of the voyage of human enterprise to date. Only those persons who have spiritual compasses in true relationship with the magnetic field of the universe in which we live can hope to contribute to the safety of the journey. (2) You are either going to be the best generation morally and spiritually speaking this old world has ever seen, or you will be the last one.

Now, pardon my idealism — but I believe you will come through!

Let us pray: O Thou who givest unto each of thy children a uniqueness of spirit that manifests thine own spirit, lay thy hands upon these thy children and by thy judgment, grace, and love, guide them in the way everlasting. May their life and work be blessed with such insight and foresight that their children's children will rise up and call them "blessed." In His name and for His sake. Amen.

Making Dialogue Preach

Introduction by John E. Skoglund

Dialogue by David Matteson

INTRODUCTION

SINCE Plato wrote his philosophy in the form of dialogues between Socrates and his friends (or enemies) the dialogic method has been recognized as a right honorable means of teaching. Occasionally it has been tried in the pulpit. Aimee Semple McPherson, the voice of Los Angeles' Echo Park, frequently began her Sunday evening sermons with dramatic dialogues. The current radio program known as "Frank and Ernest" utilizes dialogue for Bible teaching. Among Protestants, interest seems to be growing in this form of presentation. Requests often come for examples of dialogue preaching, but dialogue sermons are hard to find. They apparently do not draw publishers by their honey or else the preachers who also write books do not put them in their "to be published" file.

Dialogue preaching requires both skill and discipline. It is far easier to prepare and present a monologue written and given by one person than to develop a thought pattern which utilizes two or more voices, for dialogue is more than animated conversation about a subject and more than just a publicly presented bull session. Dialogue is skilled, disciplined and imaginatively planned conversation directed toward the presentation of a specific truth.

Dialogue presents its truth by indirection. It may begin far afield from its ultimate objective. Note how Plato begins his *Republic* not with a description of the ideal state—his ultimate objective—but rather with a conversation between Socrates and Glaucon on the occasion of their having gone down to Piraeus for a prayer meeting. They stop at the house of aged Cephalus and

engage in a discussion of the old one's longevity and wealth. Bit by bit, the dialogue moves into a discussion between Socrates and his companions on "What is Justice?" Many long speeches afterward, the main theme begins to emerge and then only obliquely. The dialogue presented below begins far away from "reconciliation and grace"—the ultimate objective. A casual and somewhat sarcastic comment on a hymn marks the starting point. Even the conclusion remains indirect: neither speaker presents the "truth" as his special possession; rather, together they come to the insight that "there can be reconciliation by grace."

The dialogue sermon was presented in the chapel of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School by the Rauschenbusch Fellowship. This group of students is committed to making relevant in its own generation the social concerns of Walter Rauschenbusch. Ray Naseman, Clint Reynolds, Paul Hardwich and David Matteson worked together in the preparation and presentation of the worship service. The final writing of the dialogue was done by Mr. Matteson. In commenting on the work of the group he writes:

"I would categorize Speaker I as taking basically a neo-orthodox position and Speaker II as liberal, but I am afraid putting labels on them would risk caricaturizing their positions. This is already done, in a sense, in the use of a third person 'Pulpit.' Grace enters not by either speaker's theological schemes, but by the Word of God. Grace by its nature is not a product of the dialogue of man and man, but a gift from outside the human situation. To indicate the differences in the players we clothed only the Speaker 'Pulpit' in a robe, the others in plain dress. Speakers I and II carried on their conversation in the center of the chancel. 'Pulpit' spoke from the pulpit at the side of and above the chancel. 'Pulpit' speaks clearly and forcefully, denoting the clarity and strength of the Word of God; whereas the others are somewhat hesitant and unsure, indicating the lack of clarity which characterizes man's word. In the last section the two Speakers turn toward each other and they soften the tone of their voices. Their incomplete sentences indicate the mutuality of their thought processes. In the end they speak with one voice and one word: 'by grace.'"

JOHN E. SKOGLUND is Cornelius Woelfkin Professor of Preaching at Colgate Rochester Divinity School. A graduate of the University of California, he received both the M.A. and B.D. degrees from Berkeley Baptist Divinity School and took his doctorate, in theology and philosophy, at Yale University. Before joining the Colgate Rochester Divinity School faculty in 1958, Dr. Skoglund was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Seattle, Washington.

DIALOGUE WORSHIP SERVICE AND SERMON

CALL TO WORSHIP

INVOCATION

HYMN "He Who Would Valiant Be"

DIALOGUE SERMON

(First and Second Speakers move from their places in the congregation to center of chancel. Third Speaker walks up to pulpit. Conversation begins as they move.)

FIRST SPEAKER (slightly sarcastic): Well, that was an interesting hymn!

SECOND SPEAKER (stands, defensive in surprise): Interesting? What do you mean?

FIRST (stands to answer): What's all this mean — following as a pilgrim?

SECOND: Why, being a Christian; doing the will of God.

FIRST: A pilgrim?

SECOND: Yes — following — obeying the commands of God.

FIRST: And what are the commands of God?

SECOND: You know, the Ten Commandments, and the other things the Bible tells about.

FIRST: So being a Christian means the obeying of commandments?

SECOND: Well, yeah . . . trying to live the moral teachings and ethical codes of Christianity.

FIRST (with scorn): Being good.

SECOND: Well, I don't mean prudishness — not smoking and drinking and all that. It's more what you do than what you don't do.

FIRST: But I'm not sure we *can* be good.

SECOND: Well, maybe not perfect — but at least we can try and do our best.

FIRST: Frankly, I'm pretty darn sure man can't come close.

SECOND (condescendingly): Well, I think if he'd quit making excuses he could do a lot better. And if he really tries, then that's enough. God doesn't ask the impossible.

PULPIT: "BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT, AS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT."

FIRST: I thought Protestant Christianity was based on faith, not works.

SECOND: Well, I can't see that it means very much to believe a bunch of stuff if you don't do anything about it.

FIRST: And if you can't do it?

SECOND: Well, we can do something. Surely Jesus taught that we should do something. Surely he was concerned for the people around him.

FIRST: I don't deny that — but I'm not Christ.

SECOND: Well you claim to believe in him.

FIRST: Right, but (continues until interrupted) I don't claim to be like him —

SECOND (interrupting): So you just have to believe and everything will be O.K. and the world can run its course straight to —

FIRST (interrupts, impatiently): I didn't say belief — I said faith.

SECOND: Now let's not quibble over words.

FIRST: It's just that the way you talk about belief it sounds like simple intellectual assent to an idea. I don't mean that.

SECOND: Well thank goodness for that. But I say we have to get into the world and grapple with it. We have to work, not just sit around and talk about theology. Have you some system to offer that's better than life and work?

FIRST (starts to respond): But —

PULPIT: "AND HE OFFERED HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR MANY."

FIRST (dubious): I started to say that faith isn't a system we offer — a group of beliefs. Faith means we offer ourselves.

SECOND: Well now you're making more sense. We do all we can to —

FIRST (interrupting): Not *do*, offer!

SECOND: You're just like the theologians — fight over words. I don't mean obeying each law literally — I mean do the spirit of the law. After all, I realize Jesus rebuked the legalists. So aren't we really saying the same thing? you're talking about —

FIRST (interrupting again): I'm talking about giving ourselves.

SECOND: Yes. Giving oneself as the basis for every action. Motivation for action (or faith if you prefer that word); isn't that really the spirit of the law?

PULPIT: "YOU ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE" (Romans 6:14).

FIRST: See? That's what I mean! It can't be the law. We can't be saved by the law. It isn't anything we do — it's what we offer. We offer ourselves. Not our works, our *faith*.

SECOND: I still think the difference is only a matter of words. And at least using the words of action shows more clearly that we have a responsibility to others around us. Certainly that's Christianity.

FIRST: No! It's more than words. We can't talk about works, because our works are never good enough for God. We can't save ourselves by works. Salvation by works is wrong — it's self-centered. That's the difference. It's self-centered.

SECOND: You have a point there . . . (pause) . . . but what about faith? . . . It's my faith just as much as it's my works. And certainly if my works aren't good enough, my faith isn't much better. I can't see that the system you offer is any less self-centered than mine. But it's certainly less socially responsible.

FIRST: We don't offer *systems*; we offer ourselves.

SECOND (challenging): We offer, we offer . . . Try again.

PULPIT: "HE HAS NO NEED, LIKE THE HIGH PRIESTS, OF DAILY SACRIFICES . . . HE DID THIS, ONCE FOR ALL, WHEN HE OFFERED UP HIMSELF."

(First and Second Speaker look at each other.)

FIRST (humbly): He offers —

SECOND: But then, what of social responsibility? I guess it can't be the basis for our faith, but maybe here's where law comes in.

FIRST: Or maybe the word "Responsibility" is the clue. This is our Response. But can we respond?

SECOND: If we can't keep the law? If we can't be good, how can we have social justice?

FIRST: Justice sounds awfully legalistic. Perhaps it isn't that we are just, but . . . that we are reconciled.

(Slowly, thoughtfully)

SECOND: So we offer ourselves, if I may use your terms . . .

FIRST: . . . We do our best.

SECOND: Not for its worth . . .

FIRST: . . . but as a response . . .

SECOND: . . . knowing that though we fail at justice . . .

FIRST: . . . there can be reconciliation . . .

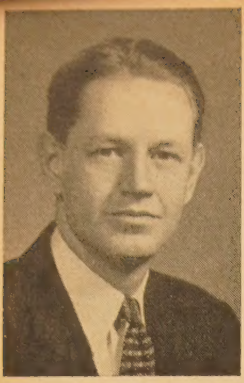
First and Second: . . . by grace.

PULPIT: Romans 5:1-11.

HYMN No. 297

PRAYER

BENEDICTION



Paradox of Dust and Destiny

By Robert Seymour

IT IS told that on one occasion the philosopher Schopenhauer was found loitering in a public park after hours and was questioned by a policeman who demanded, "Who are you and what are you doing here?" The philosopher pondered the questions for a moment, and then replied thoughtfully, "I wish I knew; I wish I knew."

Schopenhauer's answer, I am sure, would express the feeling of many people in our world today if the same questions were put to them. More than in any other period of history, man has had second thoughts about himself. Once confident that he knew what it meant to be a human being, he is not now quite so certain. The psalmist who asked rhetorically long ago, "What is man?" would discover today that the answer is highly debatable.

The debate had a stormy beginning when the theories of Charles Darwin became known to the man in the street. Not that his view of man as a creature of the animal kingdom was anything new, for Christianity has always acknowledged this. It was just that Darwin documented this relationship so directly and seemed to some to be saying not simply that man is an animal but that man is nothing more than an animal.

The debate became more heated with the findings of Freud. For the first time the tools of scientific investigation were directed within, and Freud and his followers sought to lay bare all that transpires in the human mind and imagination. Suddenly man in his very nature became the object of research, with the subtle assumption that eventually all the mystery of man's inner workings would be solved and amenable to accurate laws carefully defined.

The debate gained momentum through the mind of Karl Marx. His interest was the science of society, and his chief concern was for mankind in the mass. He was convinced that people could

be submitted to inexorable laws of society which would eventually lead to the emergence of the perfect state.

Any attempt to define the nature of man today must come to grips with the thought of Darwin, Freud, Marx, and their many disciples who have produced a plethora of physiological, social, and psychological studies intended to tell us the kind of creatures we are. More important, however, than the contributions of any single man, has been the over-all effect of the premise that man is completely reducible to scientific study and that all that we are can be understood, described and predicted in a rational way, once all the evidence is in.

This over-all effect, I think, can best be described as a benumbing feeling, an uneasy uncomfortable awareness that we are being treated as something less than human beings. We have become objects of study instead of persons. We have become statistics on a social survey instead of individuals. We have become functions of society. We are made to feel more like an "it" than a "thou." Everything about us is explained in terms of this theory or that technique, and all around us there are authorities who boast of understanding us better than we understand ourselves. We are so completely accounted for that there is little room left for that which is uniquely "me."

Soren Kierkegaard tells the story of the absent-minded man so distracted from his own life that he hardly knows he exists until, one fine morning, he wakes up to find himself dead! This story has a special point for us, for the over-all effect of the scientific approach to understanding the nature of man has caused us to sacrifice the personal to such an extent that some of us could wake up tomorrow dead without ever having touched the deep roots of our existence, without ever having had occasion to ask such questions as "Who am I, and what am I doing here?"

To illustrate what I mean, consider how we are so prone to identify ourselves completely with our vocational role in life. When someone asks, "Who are you?" our most likely answer will be "I am a

ROBERT E. SEYMOUR, pastor of the Olin T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is a graduate of Duke University and Yale Divinity School and holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

teacher," or "I am a nurse" or "I am a student." We equate ourselves with our function. There is a tombstone in a Scottish cemetery that bears the inscription, "Here lies the body of Tamos Jones, who was born a man and died a grocer." We equate ourselves with the surface of our being, and usually the rest is allowed to drop beneath and be forgotten or to subsist as best it can. Or consider the more ridiculous way we identify our personhood with things. Someone asks, "Where are you parked?" and we reply, "I am on the corner," making ourselves synonymous with our automobile!

You see, in the face of all this flood of knowledge that would pretend to define us, we have let ourselves become something less than human beings. We have been too easily satisfied with simple and surface answers about ourselves and have insulated ourselves against the opportunity to plumb the depths of our personhood.

Try as we may to account for him, the nature of man defies the neat systems of science. Reinhold Niebuhr was right when he said, "Both the majesty and tragedy of human life exceed the dimensions within which modern culture seeks to comprehend human existence." There is much more to man than scientific categories can contain, and man's nature has refused to be bound by well-ordered rational laws. Being a human being is much more complicated than many have been willing to admit. We are a bundle of contradictions and paradoxes, and not until we are prepared to acknowledge this are we likely to acquire any realistic understanding of what being a human being is all about.

The protest that has pushed us in this direction has come largely from contemporary literature and art. Modern music and art often arouse public irritation because they touch a sore spot; they bring out into the open an inner picture of man that doesn't fit into our theories and that we don't want to see. The dissonant notes and the confused colors on the canvas confront us with a part of ourselves that we have tried to pretend wasn't there. In literature, William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* is the supreme example. Faulkner dramatizes the irrational, brute quality of life by letting us see it through the eyes of an imbecile, and he describes one incident after another of man against himself for no good reason. The whole novel illustrates the quotation from which the title is taken, "Life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

The rediscovery of the irrational in human nature is at last beginning to demand attention. For decades philosophy became sterile by insisting that life be understood and approached solely by strict, logical syllogisms. And the only way this could be done was simply to overlook large areas of personal experience. Anxiety, guilt, dread, death, were topics never touched, and yet these

very topics touch the depths of life as no others do. Some sociologists still proceed on the assumption that man is basically good and that given the right environment and subjected to logical manipulation, he can be perfectly adjusted to utopian patterns of living. But now serious doubts are arising. We are discovering that it takes more than good surroundings to make a good boy. Despite his best interests—and in defiance of every logical reason—man seems hellbent. The doctrine of sin is coming into favor again. For far too long we have tried to forget the furies, but the furies have refused to be forgotten.

This protest to the scientific approach to man has centered around not only the rediscovery of the irrational but also the rediscovery of the individual. More and more there are indications of man's resentment of the incarnations of science in technology and bureaucracy which have belittled his personal significance. Man wants to be recognized as something more than a function and as something other than a cog in a big machine.

Then there is the further resentment of his being approached as an object of study and a thing to be treated, rather than as a person and a unique individual among men. I heard this protest expressed by an emotionally ill patient recently. She said, "My psychiatrist told me that I had to face reality," and then, under her breath, she muttered, "My God, I hope he never has to face it!" Here was the cry of a person pleading to be understood as a human being. And I am glad to say that there is a noticeable trend in psychiatry today to put personal experience before abstraction, to realize that individuals are individuals, and that personal understanding must always precede the applying of general techniques and treatment.

In the light of all that I have said, is it surprising that the most significant single theological treatise written in America in the twentieth century has as its title *The Nature and Destiny of Man*? Once again the pendulum is swinging back to the biblical understanding of man as the rebellious child of God.

According to our religion, man is not what he once was nor is he yet what he is intended to become. Created in the likeness of God, he has fallen far short of that likeness and, as a consequence, he exists in a state of suspended tension between what he now is and what he knows he was meant to be. This condition accounts for the contradictions we suffer and the necessity of describing ourselves in paradoxical terms. In order to get to the deeper truths about human nature we must affirm simultaneously two apparently opposing statements as true. We must say man is animal-like and man is angelic; man is reasonable and irrational; man is finite and infinite; man is

sinners and man is saint. Always there is war within us between the higher and the lower, the evil and the good, the intentions of the spirit and the desires of the flesh. And all of this is evidence of our tragic split with God, who would be our loving Father and who would relate himself to every one of us as if each of us were his only child.

We see this relationship perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ, and it is in this Man alone that we find the full meaning of human nature as God intended man to be. To be a man means to be like Jesus Christ, and the more human we are, the more we become like him. In him we are made aware of the misery of man when separated from God and the grandeur of man when restored to

God. When Jesus stood in the Roman court and Pilate said, "Behold the man!" he spoke more truly than he knew, for in him was all the fullness of manhood.

It is important that we know who we are and why we are here, for our whole response to life depends upon our understanding. We are of dust but our destiny is divine. We are wayward children of God.

In the last scene of the celebrated Broadway play, *Death of a Salesman*, the family of Willy Loman has returned home from his funeral and his sons are discussing their father's tragic life. It is his son Biff who puts his finger on the root cause of it all. He says, "He never knew who he was."

THE MOURNERS BENCH

By G. Hobab Kish

I WAS walking along the other day with nothing much on my mind (a not unusual situation), when I ran into an old friend. He is pastor of a little church out in the country near a little town called River Center. He seemed disturbed about something and his usually leisurely manner was somewhat agitated. "Got a minute?" he asked abruptly. We found a coffeehouse and an empty table. I have found sometimes that a cup of good coffee and a fifteen-minute break with a friend is better than an hour on the couch. "Shoot," I said, which is a little too abrupt and directive according to the latest books, but as I said, we were old friends.

"You ever notice," he began, "how many fellows are sounding off like experts who don't know what they are talking about?"

"Sure," I replied. "It's always been that way. Today with so many guys a long way from home, we just have more experts, that's all."

"Don't be smart with me, Hobab," he snapped. "I'm older than you and smarter too. You city fellows get a lingo that makes some people think you are clever. I know better." I apologized meekly.

"What I mean," he said, "is that the ministry is being defined, criticized, analyzed, pitied, generalized by people who never were ministers."

He had my interest now. "Elucidate," I commanded.

"Well," he went on, "here is an article — in a preacher's magazine — by a dean of a theological seminary. Now this fellow has never been out of a classroom. He never served a student church. He never had to deal with an ornery music committee or resist the lethargy of the deacons. You know what he says about ministers? He says they are arrogant and full of pride. I don't know

anybody like that — except you," he added nastily. I ignored it and he went on.

"Another fellow writes that we are all promoters who have lost our sense of spiritual mission. You know who he is? A church bureaucrat who served a student church for one year. That was all the people could stand. Now there comes along a retired candy manufacturer who says the ministers are communist dupes. I tell you, I have had about all I can take.

"Now preachers have all sorts of faults. Some of us are lazy and some of us don't shine our shoes. But the fellows I know are running themselves ragged trying to help people. When a community gets hysterical, it is usually a preacher who stands up and gets thrown at. Ever hear of a preacher named Foreman? We stamp out more communism in a minute than all these delayed adolescents playing spy will find in a hundred years. We try to tell the kids something about God and our Lord on Sunday, while their parents are filling them with TV swill all the rest of the week. We're not as bright or inspiring as we ought to be. But please, let us have an end to these smart remarks from people who never sat up all night with the husband of a dying woman and never had to tell a mother her boy was killed in an accident."

For once in my life I had nothing to say and God gave me sense enough to keep quiet. I waited.

"Thanks for the coffee," he grinned, and was on his way.

I thought about all the preachers I know and I got agitated too. Who writes all this stuff anyway? Not the fellow who is bearing the burden of the day. He is too busy trying to move his congregation along another inch here and prevent a backwash there. Let these experts learn the glory and tragedy of being a pastor before they pontificate.



Life in Terms of Covenant

By John H. Marks

ONE of the enduring achievements of ancient Hebrew thought is the insistence that human life be considered in terms of covenant, the insistence that life receives its fullest meaning when it is accepted and spent as a gift. We miss the boldness and freshness of this insight today because we do not usually think of covenants at all, much less as a means of understanding life. We tend to think of life either in terms of status or of contract and bargain. But for the ancient world too the notion of life as a covenant was something new. Life in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Palestine was centered around the notion of status, status granted or withheld by the gods, status fixed and immutable. Those people believed the world was made by the gods for their own convenience. They conceived of man as existing primarily to serve the divine hierarchy in the capacity to which he was born. His status as a servant of the gods determined the essence of his relationship to his fellow servants.

Today, when we like to believe we have abandoned status as a key to understanding human life, we still think of life in terms of contract or bargain, in terms of a *quid pro quo*, "I'll do this if you'll do that." Living, we maintain, can be thought of as a logical social contract. And we relegate God to practical nonexistence, as one who cannot be bothered with this world, or we reduce his omnipotence to that of a whimsical granddaddy who needs to be appeased or cajoled into doing or being what we want. Against the notions of life as a contract, "an agreement upon consideration to do or not to do particular things," or life as status, foreordained by gods who created the world only to serve their own whimsical desires, Israel set the profoundly significant notion of covenant.

What is the significance of covenant as a symbol for interpreting life? Obviously it implies

relationship. The Old Testament covenant was to be sure in some sense a legally and morally binding agreement. But it was more than that. It became a symbol of the way in which men were related to one another, to truth, to justice, to mercy, to God. As such a symbol it is still valid. It implies that man is not alone in the world. There is no such creature as a self-made man. We all share one another's joys and misfortunes whether we will or not. There is no escape from the neighbor's influence, whether for good or ill. We are what we are because of other people, and what we are has also helped to make them what they are. Covenant implies solidarity and community, mutuality.

But the prophetic insight went deeper than that. The covenant was not a mere happenstance or public convenience; it was at the heart of reality, ordained and given by God who thereby obligated himself on behalf of his creation and obligated his creatures on behalf of each other. The covenant rested on God's justice and holiness and love, and to accept the covenant meant that one conceived of life in terms of justice, righteousness and love as they were revealed in God. The Hebrews, and the ancient world as a whole, were never troubled with the problem of whether God exists or not. But what did trouble them was the nature of God, and in seeking an answer to this question the Hebrews invented the covenant, both as a symbol and as a legal form. The covenant expressed their conception of life as corporate, responsible community under God. The moral obligations of this way of life were expressed by faithfulness, righteousness, justice, honesty, love. These were not mere abstractions, but they derived from God and depended upon him for their substance and meaning. How did this theology arise?

The Hebrew notion of God, the prophetic insistence on morality, the New Testament conception of redemption all derive from a reading of history. The idea of covenant and the idea of history belong together. They are part of what one might call the prophetic intuition. When

JOHN H. MARKS, a graduate of the University of Denver and Princeton Theological Seminary, received the Ph.D. degree from the University of Basel, Switzerland. Dr. Marks, an ordained Presbyterian minister, is assistant professor in the department of oriental languages and literature at Princeton University.

Israel began reflecting on its past it did so in terms of redemption from Egypt and life in a promised land, and the nexus in which these two historical entities found meaning was the covenant. The fact which the prophets could never forget was that Israel had been slaves in Egypt and had escaped miraculously. This escape could only have been God's doing. Similarly the New Testament writers could never forget that Israel had been slaves to a land and a system and had escaped miraculously from itself as it were. This escape was inexorably related to the mystery of the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ. God had redeemed his people. History bore witness to that. The covenant was a convenient symbol to express the fact, and its ramifications probed the relationship of God to his people and his people to him. This relationship has been immortalized in a passage from the prophet Micah.

To think of life in terms of covenant means first of all, says Micah, to remember God's redeeming acts in history. As a principle this is fundamental. All morality and obligation, all justice and mercy, all giving and rewarding when properly conceived are based on God's redeeming acts. This gives to "goodness" a point of reference, an objective criterion; this saves it from abstraction and Platonic forms and roots it in history. Goodness corresponds in some way to reality, it derives from what God has done. But what are God's saving acts? Did they include the Assyrian menace in Micah's day, or do they include the divided Jerusalem in our own? Is there any justification for picking and choosing those events in history which *we* may gratefully regard as God's saving acts but which other men must inevitably regard as destructive? Is the criterion subjective, or is there an objective test? There are those who answer this question by distinguishing between sacred and profane history. The events of redemption, recorded in Scripture, are sacred history, and everything else is profane — and the inference is that it is not important or ultimately interesting. But the criteria for this distinction are never clear, and such a cleavage minimizes the religious significance of so-called profane history.

What the prophet seems to imply is that God works in all of history for the salvation of his people, even and especially in the Assyrian menace. This is tantamount to saying that all life is meant to be redemptive; but this divine working is known only by those who have accepted life as covenant. If one rejects the covenantal interpretation of history, then one cannot speak of God's saving acts at all for there is no nexus for interpretation; there are only isolated facts, annals, statistics, neither good nor bad in themselves. But if one accepts the covenant interpretation, then one must begin where the prophets begin, with Israel's history, for the covenant as a symbol for interpreting life is

a Hebrew conception, derived from and illustrated by Israel's history.

For us, therefore, God's redeeming acts in history must be seen from the viewpoint of God's covenant with Israel and with mankind in Christ. Where else can we begin? The American revolution, for example, may appear redemptive to Americans and destructive to British, or destructive or redemptive to either. But the redemptive or destructive nature of the event cannot be absolutely determined at all, any more than one can call the Exodus from Egypt absolutely redemptive. What is at stake is a view of history in which man's relation to God and God's relation to man can be adequately formulated and understood, by which man's life can be fulfilled, in which man's life becomes meaningful. If one accepts the notion of covenant as Israel formulated it, then God's act is always redemptive, that is, for man's ultimate salvation; for God has promised to redeem his people, and God is a covenant-keeping God. In these terms life itself is God's gift.

In the second place, infers Micah, to think of life in terms of covenant means to respond in gratitude to God's redeeming acts in history. The covenant implies community, mutuality, and a righteous, faithful God. It implies a mutual relationship of rights and duties, and in this light Micah states man's obvious problem bluntly: "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?" The covenant implies not only remembrance of God's mercies but also responsibility because of them. No one should know that any better than we who are surfeited with the good things of life while most of the world is in misery. If we accept the covenantal interpretation of life, then everyone we meet has a real claim on our love, our mercy, and our gratitude, our gratitude for this concrete opportunity to give ourselves to need. But what shall we do?

The passage in Micah is interesting in this respect. The climactic utterance seems to go further than anyone could dare to go. Shall I give God a sacrifice, not something I can enjoy giving because there is some profit in it for me, but something which is consumed entirely on the altar of God? And what if I give not only one sacrifice, but tens of thousands? Should the sacrifice be as costly as possible, calves a year old rather than newborn calves which have required no care on my part? Or shall I go so far as to give the fruit of my body — my own child or children? These questions all imply a false notion of God. They imply that God can be bribed, that he wants to be bribed, that religion is a matter of religious philanthropy, that somehow if one can only give enough God will be pleased. But the curious fact about this climax is that the questioner never mentions the obvious sacrifice, the gift of his own life. The prophet

applies this answer for him: you have been told, O man, often enough what the good thing is that God expects of you—to effect justice, to love faithfulness and truth, to be lowly in walking with God. This is the kind of self-sacrifice God expects and covenant demands.

But how does one give oneself to God? The simplicity of Micah's answer is overpowering. One gives oneself to God by imitating God, by being a God to one's fellows, as Luther put it, and by walking humbly with God, for one can never be certain that one has acted justly, in love, or in truth. Here the covenant idea becomes quite clear. The covenant demands a proper relationship of men to each other and to God, and these two aspects of the covenant relationship are inseparable. Proper regard for my neighbor is dependent on proper awareness of what God has done and therefore is like. Proper regard for God is dependent on the awareness of the real claims my neighbor has upon me. The covenant relationship is not satisfied by my being just, but I must create the conditions where justice will prevail, I must *do* justice. The covenant relationship is not satisfied when I am loyal to my neighbor's dignity, but I must actively seek every opportunity for him to fulfill himself, to become the kind of person he is destined by God's grace to be. My obligation to the covenant is not done when I am religious or pious, but I must pursue justice, mercy and truth in lowliness, in fear and trembling, in humility, knowing full well that I may have erred completely. My neighbor may be the person I have most sincerely overlooked in my zeal to give myself to the Lord. As a partner to the covenant I must act, but my acts must always be tempered by the consciousness that whatever I do is subject to God's judgment and mercy, that he alone is just and true in all his ways.

Finally, to think of life in terms of covenant means to act at all times in faith. This is the meaning of Micah's final injunction, and it gives substance to the other requirements. One can act justly and in truth and love only by faith. In faith one remembers God's saving acts, confesses God's mercy in acts of truth and love, and above all trusts God for the outcome. Faith is the humble confession that one may be all wrong, and the humble conviction that nevertheless love somehow is at the heart of reality, or as the New Testament puts it, that God is love. To walk with God is to believe that God accepts us as we are. But the walk is not therefore arrogant, for as partners to God's covenant we recognize his mercy; rather the walk is humble, lowly, modest, self-controlled in the knowledge that "God is at work in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure." Faith in God is not a *carte blanche* to do as one pleases, for faith too comes within the covenant relation. We belong to one another and to God, we are bound

to imitate God. But faith is the assurance that God the Judge is also God the Redeemer, that life, in spite of all its vicissitudes and our failures is still not a curse but a gift. Christmas means the angels' song, a song of gladness when God himself chose to become man. To think of life in terms of covenant means to live in terms of Christmas and Good Friday and Easter, in the light of the Exodus and the Exile and the Return.

In the last analysis our faith is simply an attempt to come to terms with life. Ancient Israel, set in the midst of civilizations far surpassing its own in every respect, rejected all contemporary religious interpretations and produced its own enduring interpretation. The way this happened is a mystery. We call it the mystery of revelation. What other way could we describe it? And at the heart of this interpretation there is the symbol of the covenant, that symbol which describes the mystery of man's relationship to Truth and to his fellow men. And when one looks closely at the biblical message, one is impressed with the movement which could be expressed by the covenant: the movement from chaos to creation, from civilization and slavery through the desert of anxiety to promised land, from isolation and despair to community and meaning, from darkness to light, from death to life. The entire movement is supported by the covenant-keeping God who wills to redeem. God is in the midst to save.

This is the framework in which we also attempt to come to terms with life. It is not the only possible framework, but for us it is the most satisfying. This faith is not exclusive but inclusive, because God's love is also inclusive. It is not fearful but hopeful, because God is in the midst as the covenant God. It is not degrading but ennobling because God became man, and the angels sang for joy at his coming. To accept this covenant of mercy is to believe in God.

What does God expect of you? To remember and know that your life is God's gift, not to you only, but for everyone. To give yourself, not merely your gifts, to God; to live as one who knows the holy, righteous and merciful God has become man, and to imitate his works. And finally to accept this interpretation and way of life in humility and faith—remembering both God's judgment and mercy! We may reject the covenant idea. Most of us do. Even Israel found it a difficult symbol to live by. But worship reminds us again of its truth and of our decision to accept it as Christians. If our response to God's mercy is to be good, acceptable to God, it will be our self-giving to the needs of our time in the faith that we are imitating God and serving him in truth.

"He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"



The Heavy Hand of God

By Robert W. Greene

So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life." Genesis 45: 4-5.

BEHIND the story of Joseph and his brothers we discern the heavy hand of God. Joseph breaks down and weeps at the sight of his brothers who had sold him into slavery. But he weeps not out of remorse nor merely because he would soon see his old father again; he weeps because he has become aware of a love and a meaning even deeper than family ties. He weeps because he sees that through apparent disaster, God had been shaping his life for good. He had found a meaningful answer to the cruel experiences which had happened to him.

Have we understood our own lives in this way? Have we experienced a love deeper than even the tenderest human affection working in our lives to bring some real good out of the apparently tragic and sometimes cruel blows that may have fallen upon us? Perhaps nothing is more difficult to bear than the feeling that our experiences are meaningless, that we are helpless in the hands of an indifferent fate. We ask ourselves, "What possible good can come out of this tragic experience or this baffling frustration?" Joseph must have asked this question the day his brothers betrayed him into slavery and his father into grief.

To say that this experience of Joseph's or the cruel things which happen to us are the will of God is no help. How could we worship a God who willed evil? We cannot see God in an experience that to us is purely evil. For us there is nothing of God in the meaningless experiences of life. Sometimes what happens to us and to those we love

does seem emptied of God. The hand of God is hidden.

Frederick W. Robertson, while passing through a spiritual crisis in his life, wrote:

I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scatheless; it is by holding fast to those things that are certain still—the grand, simple landmarks of morality. In the darkest hour through which a human soul passes, whatever else is doubtful, this is at least certain. If there is no God and no future state, yet even then, it is better to be generous than selfish; better to be chaste than licentious; better to be true than false; better to be brave than a coward. Blessed beyond all blessedness is the man who in the tempestuous darkness of the soul has dared to hold to these venerable landmarks. Thrice blessed because his night shall pass into clear bright day.*

Our souls are betrayed and we are destroyed not by the unfortunate experiences which happen to us but by our betrayal of what we know is unmistakably right. Joseph did not betray "the simple landmarks of morality" when to him there came the meaningless and hard experience. He did not return evil for evil, but remained righteous even as a slave in the household of Pharaoh. It took the passage of years for him to understand how God could bring some meaningful good from his experience. Life had to produce a whole new set of circumstances before his experience could be assimilated and woven into a meaningful whole. Yet Joseph trusted God to work this transformation.

Faith does not always give us an immediate answer, nor does it assure us a blueprint for action. Yet faith is the answer for seemingly meaningless experiences even though time is required for the meaning to be manifested. Faith does not require an immediate answer, nor does it demand a view of the end. Faith is the assurance that there is an answer and that the end is good. This is what the long story of Joseph reveals. It is a saga of faith.

When we are close to a situation we can see nothing but the situation. Perhaps this was true of Joseph. When he was first sold into Egypt, what was most apparent to him was the jealousy of his brothers, the walls of the pit into which he was

ROBERT W. GREENE has served pastorates in Warrenton, North Carolina and in Chicago and Evanston, Illinois. A graduate of Mercer University and Yale Divinity School, Mr. Greene is now minister of Norfield Congregational Church, Weston, Connecticut.

* Leaves from a Spiritual Notebook, compiled by Thomas S. Kepler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1960) p. 30, selection 19.

thrown, the chains in which the slave traders bound him, and the cruel separation from his father. Yet in the house of Pharaoh he kept his integrity. It was only years later that he broke into tears when he saw the opportunity of reconciliation with his brothers and the chance to embrace his father again. It was then that he fully understood that the folly of man is one thing and the providence of God another.

In many events which seem meaningless to us, there is the heavy hand of God. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord." We are not the playthings of fate. There is a difference between fate and providence. Fate implies an end over which there is no influence. It may be for us lucky or unlucky, but it can only be amoral. If an event or an action is absolutely determined without any reference to my will or God's mercy there can be no moral quality in the event or action. Providence implies that there is a purposeful end toward which we may move under the guiding hand of God. Although we have no description of the end, the end cannot be evil.

Belief in providence sets a man in search of God's will and it is in the search that we become real men and women. Belief in fate relieves us of this responsibility. It can be the refuge of the coward. Belief in providence is belief against all odds that God works in our individual and collective history towards his purpose for his world.

Belief in providence makes a man fight against destructive forces both within and without. Faith is the inner assurance of God's ultimate victory. Belief in fate can make a man surrender to both evil in himself and in others, or can give him a false confidence that will lead him to trust an illusory omnipotence. Belief in fate is the inevitable alternative to man's refusal to be guided by providence. Belief in fate results in the surrender of manhood. Belief in providence forces us to look at the whole of life and not just at some aspect of our experience. If we brood over some experience as disastrously fateful, we shall never find any meaning in our trying experiences.

Men who have believed in providence have been men of freedom who dared to believe that life is a pilgrimage in which all experience is part of a whole. They have been men who have hewn out of the rocks of adversity a life in which the heavy hand of God was so at work that they could not be defeated.

When we live in the providence of God we find continuity in our experience. We see that what we do today has a meaningful relation to what we can do tomorrow. We discover that what happens to us today may in time be woven into some meaningful pattern with yesterday's experience. We all like to feel that our present life has roots in the past and to know that our lives are all of a

piece. But many of us are uprooted and we wait, sometimes in anguish, for that integration of past and present which faith finally brings.

Life demands continuity; faith supplies it. When we are uprooted, or when our experience seems meaningless, we must practice waiting. When we feel like helpless pawns in a ridiculous side show, with no sense of direction for the future, we can act on the few things we know are certain. Then belief in God's providence will begin to validate itself and we shall have an anchor. When we can accept all our experiences and say, "Lord, I want to be a pilgrim," we are then not far from the kingdom of heaven.

We do live in a world of purpose and destiny. Mine may be a small role to play and much of it may seem senseless folly. But no man who ever sets out earnestly to see what God has for him to do will find that his life ends meaninglessly. Very few of us will die feeling that our lives are complete or that we accomplished what we should have. The Christian will always feel that he has failed Christ, but he knows that Christ does not fail him.

There can be meaning even in the experience of madness. Dr. Anton Boisen affirms this in *Out of the Depths*, the story of his life. He struggled for years to understand the meaning of his own mental suffering. After becoming a parish minister, he suffered a severe mental breakdown and was a patient in a mental hospital for several years. He had several relapses but after each one he sought the meaning behind his experience. He began to see his psychotic breaks as purposeful. Behind them was a force working for sanity, and in these sufferings he saw an opportunity to bring real meaning and understanding to these darker aspects of the human soul.

He never returned to the parish ministry but became a minister to the mentally ill and served in this capacity for many years. Dr. Boisen became a pioneer in the field of mental health and in theological education. Now, in his old age, he looks back and sees the heavy hand of God working toward a meaning and purpose he could not always see. Dr. Boisen has been a real pilgrim in the agonizing wilderness of the human soul.

The Christian life begins initially as a response of trust, born out of hearing the gospel. We do not become members of the spiritually elite; no, we enter into the infantry of ordinary soldiers, plodding the way of the cross through the ever changing lights and shadows of human experience. We no longer see either our own lives or the lives of others as a meaningless turmoil ending in a void. Instead, we, like Joseph, run to meet again the brothers that were lost to us, and we fall on their necks and kiss them, and we cry, "And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life."

Thoughts on Preaching

Said by C. H. Spurgeon:

✚ IT IS not the sheet lightning, seen in all places, that takes effect; but it is the forked flash that smites the temple, or scorches the tree.

✚ THERE IS much virtue which is like the juice of the grape, which has to be squeezed before you get it; not like the generous drop of the honeycomb, distilling willingly and freely.

✚ I MOURN and grieve that our ministers are so much diluting the Word of God with philosophy, desiring to be intellectual preachers, delivering model sermons, well fitted for a room full of college students and professors of theology, but of no use to the masses, being destitute of simplicity, warmth, earnestness, or even solid gospel matter.

✚ IT IS good to be able, like some great minds, to attract the mighty; but the more useful man will still be he, who, like Whitfield, uses 'market language'; for it is a sad fact that high places and

the gospel seldom well agree; and, moreover, be it known, that the doctrine of Christ is the doctrine of the people.

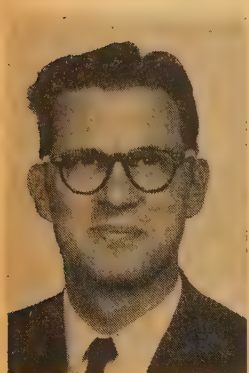
Said of C. H. Spurgeon:

✚ HE COMES directly before the people, impelled by something acutely felt, and which needs to be speedily uttered, so that he may, as soon as possible, pass on to a yet fresher and wider space, wherein he may think more and speak better to the accumulating crowds, who always press toward frank hearts and free lips.

✚ MR. SPURGEON began the assiduous study of books at an early period. . . . But he did not heap books so high about his boyhood as to exclude nature from a loving and ennobling view.

✚ A PREACHER is not divinely called and elevated to be a facile weathercock, turned by the wind; but, like a tower of strength in scenes of danger, not less luminous than resolute, he is to turn the winds.

(The above quotations are from *Sermons of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon*, introduced and edited by E. L. Magoon. Published in 1857.)



The Relentless Chase of The Galilean

The Unlikely Prospects

By Eric Dean

"Do you too want to become his disciples?" John 9:27b

THIS QUESTION, for all its pleasant air of irony, seems absurd in the context in which it appears. The Pharisees — "the Jews," as the text continually refers to them — were examining the erstwhile blind man with a view to entrapping Jesus. If only they could discover some evidence to discredit Jesus before the people! How odd, then, to ask of such men if they wanted to become

his disciples. They disavowed any such intention with great vehemence — and yet one wonders whether they do not protest overmuch.

One might think these men unlikely prospects for discipleship; their whole attitude was wrong to begin with. Surely it would be reasonable to expect potential disciples of Christ at the very least to acknowledge his superiority as to teaching, to recognize his preternatural goodness. So one might reasonably think. Yet the question is asked, "Do you too want to become his disciples?" And being asked of them, it directs to us the question concerning what prepares a man for discipleship of Christ. And being asked of us, it casts into doubt all of our neat little ideas concerning preparation for discipleship.

There was a young man, you may recall, who approached Christ with all that one might

ERIC DEAN was born in London, England and served as a navigator with the Royal Air Force during World War II. A graduate of the University of Chicago (A.B., B.D. and Ph.D.) and an ordained minister of the United Presbyterian Church (USA), Dr. Dean is associate professor of philosophy and religion and chairman of the religion department, Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana.

properly expect of a potential disciple. "Good Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Note here the recognition of Christ's goodness and of the fact that Christ was a teacher of distinction. But did this young man become a disciple? The Gospel tells us that he went away sad.

There was a young man, you may recall, who was known throughout the Jewish world as the scourge of Christianity. He devoted his life to the persecution of Christians and possessed the dubious honor of attending the death of the first recorded Christian martyr. Not, one might think, a good prospect; and yet, this scourge of Christianity would become the most incendiary of the apostles: none other than Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

Is it, then, so odd to say to the Pharisees hounding Christ, "Do you too want to become his disciples?"

Is it too much to say that few men willingly become the disciples of Christ? The poor and the outcast, we read of their coming to Christ; but we are neither poor nor outcast. What need have we of a savior? We, proud lovers that we are, like the rich young ruler, are concerned only to ask what we must do—we, ourselves; and, not liking what we hear in response, we go away sad.

Not only do we go away, we flee from Christ for we do not care to hear what he has to say to us. What do we want with grace and forgiveness? Are we not sufficient unto ourselves? Shall we not deserve anything we receive? Who is this, then, who speaks to us of grace; of a gift we cannot merit? Are we not decent, upright individuals, giving each of our fellows his due? Who is this, then, who speaks to us of forgiveness? Everything that Christ represents is a scandal to our sense of self-respect, and we run hurriedly from his presence.

But fleeing him, as Francis Thompson has movingly written, we hear the unhurried footfall of him who relentlessly pursues us. Christ, the Hound of Heaven, is ever behind us in our headlong flight. We deny him, but—and this is what we most furiously resent—we cannot prevent his accepting us. Thus fleeing from him until our bursting hearts will permit us to run no longer, we hear again the question: "Do you too want to become his disciples?"

Or perhaps we choose not to run, and rather take our stand with the Pharisees, bent only on proving that he is not the Christ which the church confesses him to be. "What kind of salvation can you bring, you despised Galilean? You will not be able, at the last, to prevent yourself from being executed like a common criminal. What kind of religion can be centered upon such a person as you?"

On such a theme as this one can expatiate by the hour! Better than to take the name of Christ, I shall grapple with my own fate; and if I am

overwhelmed by it, as doubtless I shall be, I shall possess the dignity of one who has struggled. Better than to take the name of a despised member of a despised race, I shall choose a religion of elevated sentiments and dignified and aesthetically pleasing ritual. I thank you, and I thank you, I do not care to become a Christian.

And then, becoming increasingly thrilled by our intoxicating eloquence, we are suddenly rendered dumb by the question of a man once blind: "Do you too want to become his disciple?" To become his disciple? That is the last thing I want for myself! Why, then, do I take him so seriously as to denounce him as a misguided individual, as a false savior, as a charlatan?

Thou Christ, wilt thou not have done with me? Why dost thou not let me alone? If I want to run from thee, why must thou pursue? If I stay to revile thee, why canst thou not revile me again?

This is the relentlessness of the divine. Not a relentlessness which strikes us down for being the sinners that we are, but the relentlessness which will not leave us to be the petty, self-important creatures that we should like to be. It is the insistent reminder that we are not of our own creating, and that the little niche that we carve out for ourselves in the esteem of our colleagues and friends is, finally, of but cold comfort. We would create for ourselves gods in our own image, and could successfully do so were it not for that hated and yet loved, that despised and yet cherished, question which dins in our ears: "Do you too want to become his disciples?"

How long shall we hold out? How long can we hold out? At last the chase is over. At last dies the curse on our lips. Thou hast conquered, Galilean!

God and This Life's Caesars

(Continued from page 3)

asking what they owe God over against what they owe the state—as though man's duty were divisible—but by asking with what tyrants in our time men collaborate, incurring an indebtedness which reduces their allegiance to God? Can we not ask them for the coin, the symbol of their complicity in evil and their loyalty to what is less than God? What coins does the modern man, today's churchman, carry in his moneybag and on those coins, what image and what inscription? We must strike the theocentric accent of this text, but we must show as well what false gods must go if God is to come. Until instructed further—as the experts in exegesis are capable of doing—this minister sees in this text a message about man and God and in between the lure of this life's Caesars.

—KYLE HASELDEN



If to Be Human Is to Be in Danger,
How Be Scared Bravely?

The Brave Way to Be Scared

By Melvin E. Wheatley

ASHLEY Montagu begins his book *On Being Human* with the sentence: "To be human is to be in danger." I begin this sermon with that same sentence because I am convinced that Ashley Montagu speaks the truth. To be human is to be in danger. It is to be in danger in at least three vital but vulnerable points of human value: physical safety, social status, personal significance. To be human is to be in chronic danger of harm to our physical beings and material assets. It is to be in danger of sudden changes in our social status coming as a result of shifts in our interpersonal relationships. It is to be in danger of failing to find a sense of one's own significance, or finding it only to lose it in a rat race of meaninglessness. To be human is to be in danger.

This means that there is a sense in which the currently popular crack is as wise as it is witty: If you can keep your head while all about you are losing theirs — it just could be you haven't grasped the situation! "No member of our generation," writes Bonaro Overstreet, "who has a mature sense of reality and responsibility can experience a literal freedom from fear."¹

But if this is our precarious predicament — if to be human is to be in danger to such a degree that no member of our generation who has a mature sense of reality and responsibility can experience a literal freedom from fear — then what can we experience besides panic? How can we grasp the situation and still keep our heads?

We turn for our answer this morning to that old story of the Israelites as they approached the promised land. Long ago they had discovered that to be human was to be in danger. They had just fought their way out of Egypt and struggled across the desert. Now, on the border of their dreams, as an act of precaution, they send out twelve scouts to spy out the land. The scouts come back with a report that is unanimous at one point; the land is all they ever hoped it might be — but it is more. It does flow with milk and honey; its grapes are so abundant that it takes two men to carry one

bunch of them — but the land in which such grapes grow is also inhabited by unfriendly giants. In the face of the latter fact they were all scared; but scared was not all some of them were. Whereas ten of the twelve insisted not only that they should not try to get into the promised land but that they should beat a hasty retreat all the way back to the slave camps of Egypt, two of the scouts, admitting that the giants were there, nevertheless insisted, "Let us go up at once and occupy the land for we are well able to overcome it." Caleb and Joshua were scared; but they managed somehow to lay hold of a brave way to be scared. Finding the same approach to our predicament is now our problem.

What is the brave way to be scared? It begins, I suspect, somewhere close to the point of any individual's honest acceptance of the hard fact that life offers no rewards without proportionate risks. Every promised land worth possessing is guarded by jealous giants.

Physical life itself is such a land. From the precarious moment of conception, to the hazardous business of being born, on to that vast adventure of dying — physical life is an uninterrupted series of contests with contentious opponents. These opponents appear in forms as alluring as a cloud of whipped cream on a wedge of pecan pie or as angry as germs flaming into infection in a puncture wound. But whatever their form, they stand arrayed in opposition between us and physical wholeness and health.

But to learn is as risky as to live. New pilots tell us that there is nothing quite as exhilarating as those first air-borne moments of solo flight, or nothing quite as frightening, either. Yet suppose

MELVIN E. WHEATLEY, JR., son and grandson of Methodist ministers, is pastor of Westwood Community Methodist Church, Los Angeles and lecturer in homiletics at Southern California School of Theology, Claremont. President of his denomination's Southern California-Arizona Conference Board of Education, he is also active in community affairs and serves as ministerial counselor for the Los Angeles Mental Health Clinic. Dr. Wheatley is the author of *Going His Way*, published by Fleming H. Revell Company in 1957.

¹ Bonaro Overstreet, *Understanding Fear in Ourselves and Others* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1951).

our powers of recall were really quite keen. It could be in that case that most of us would remember those first two successive steps we took as faltering infants as outdistancing any subsequent human achievement in both thrill and apprehension. So shall it ever be. To widen the range of our skills we are forced to accept the embarrassment of our limitations. To expand the realm of our knowledge we must expose the raw nerves of our ignorance.

But if living and learning are risky — what then shall we say about loving? Jean-Paul Sartre in his play *No Exit* has Garcin declare: "Hell is the other people." And there is just such a dark side to our togetherness. The fears that tear us most deeply beneath the surface and come closest to plowing us under are the fears that arise out of our interpersonal relationships. But the threats are in proportion to the stakes. For whether they be hell or not, hell is not all other people are. They just happen, at the same time, to be the most important single other component in the total context of our experience. Nothing else matters quite so much in life as to be loved and to love — to feel that we are valued and affirmed, deep down within ourselves, not because of what we are, not because of what we do, but just because of who we are, by those whom we value and affirm.

Artur Rubenstein said this beautifully in a recent telecast. Thanks to the timely phone call of a good friend, we tuned in as this great artist was playing the piano in his home. Toward the end of the program, Mr. Rubenstein said: "During the early years of my career, I went across Europe winning honors and playing to the applause of the public, but all the while filled with a great sense of restlessness and unfulfillment. And I kept on feeling this way until, finally, one day I did the smartest thing I ever did in my life. I married the woman who is now my wife. For, as you well know, success has meaning only when seen through the eyes of one you love." Ah yes, hell may be other people, but heaven is other people, too. Loving, quite like living and learning, is a promised land worth possessing. But to claim its rewards you have to undergo its risks.

But now, if the brave way to be scared begins at the point of accepting the hard fact that you cannot run after life's great rewards without running into life's great risks, it moves head on into an opposite fact that is even harder for some of us to accept: you cannot run away from life's risks simply by turning your back on life's rewards. In the terminology of our scriptural story: giving up the grapes is at long last as risky as standing up to giants. That favorite phrase we frequently use about "playing it safe" says this precisely. Most of the time those spiritual descendants of the ten timid spies who play it safe are doing exactly that — playing. As the Negro spiritual warns, "There's

no hiding place down here." As Thomas Wolfe reminds us, "You can't go home again."

In his short story, "The Burrow," Franz Kafka tells of an animal who enjoys some security in the seclusion of his burrow. But that seclusion disappears when he reflects that the two exits to the burrow which represent his means of escape may also be used as entrances. What if some nameless enemy were to come looking for him? He builds a number of other tunnels, each of which provides an alternate exit but each of which also increases the number of entrances an enemy could use! Such is the haunting predicament of every human being who tries to become a hider. Every form of running away from life ends up at last in just such compounded fear and futility, produced by risks that have a way of looking us up, even though we have turned our backs on their more familiar counterparts.

Newspaper headlines carried the shocking story of the death of Sara Roosevelt. The fifteen year old daughter of John Roosevelt, while climbing a cliff, fell and was fatally injured. Earlier the same day she had fallen from a horse. Every such story sends tremors of fear through the framework even of sturdy parents. There is a momentary wishing for some lost Eden of protection against such perils. If only we could grow our offspring in pleasant sanctuaries of antiseptic safety. But even if such a sterile vacuum were available it would not be desirable. For overprotection of our offspring is as great a hazard to their wholeness as overexposure. Never to have to climb is in the end as fatal as to fall.

This principle runs quite as relentlessly through the emotional and spiritual aspects of our beings as through the physical. C. S. Lewis says this brilliantly in his book, *The Four Loves*. He warns that multitude among us who think that by relinquishing the rewards of love, they can thereby run away from love's risks: "To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in a casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket — safe, dark, motionless, airless — it will change. It will not be broken — it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable."² Running away from life's rewards is, you see, quite as risky as running after them. Giving up the lovely grapes that are growing in some promised land is in the end even more costly than standing up to the giants who guard them.

But we have now come to what seems to me to be inescapably the next consideration. If to be

² C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1960). Used by permission.

human is to be in danger, if every way we turn we run great risks, then surely the brave way to be scared is to live dangerously by design, not by default. Estimating our resources accurately, we then spend them up to the hilt as we lay them on the line that moves in the direction of life's rewards and not away from them.

Precisely this kind of courage human beings of all sizes and shapes demonstrate every day — and quite dramatically on occasion. In his *Profiles in Courage* John Kennedy tells numerous such stories. It seems, for example, that after reviewing a tremendous stack of affidavits and court records, Governor John Peter Altgeld of Illinois was convinced that an unfair trial and insufficient evidence had convicted the three defendants, not yet hanged, of murder in Chicago's famous Haymarket Square bombing of 1886. Warned by Democratic leaders that he must forget these convicts if he still looked toward the Senate, Altgeld replied, "No man's ambition has a right to stand in the way of performing a simple act of justice"; and then when asked by the Democratic State Chairman if his eighteen thousand word pardon document was "good policy" he thundered, "It is right."

But though such dramatic acts of courage are invaluable to inspire us, about ninety per cent of life, I would guess, is sustained by a much less noticeable but no less necessary everyday brand of bravery. I never expect to see a more indomitable demonstration of courage than the frail figure of a five-year-old as with hunched shoulders and downward gaze he walked bravely but scared into that wide, wide world of living and learning and loving indifferently labeled by adults, "The first day of school"! Yet he at his level, and in his time and place, quite as much as the brave governor of any state, was laying his resources on the line in the direction of life's rewards and not away from life's risks.

But we dare not conclude any formula for courage drawn from such ancient worthies of our heritage as Joshua and Caleb without taking one more step. That is to locate the ultimate source of their bravery precisely where they would place it: in none other than their covenant relationship with Almighty God. To them, the rewards and the risks of the promised land, as well as every resource they could call their own, were all a part of his providence. It was this sense of involvement with a dependable God of justice and mercy which more than any other single power released their capacity to be courageous men. A similar sense of involvement still has that power.

My good friend and the able theologian, Professor Carl Michalson, writes delightfully, "Last Thanksgiving Day my family and I were guests for dinner in one of New York City's towering apartments. The festivities over, we started home. The whole family boarded the elevator high over

Manhattan. It was already crowded with overfed people. On the way down the elevator stuck between two floors. There was no apparent passage of escape. Impenetrable walls were around us, an abyss beneath us, a pitiless sky above us . . . From amid the quiet chaos of this situation came one certain note. A little child pursed together his lips and piped a familiar tune. Adult throats took up the hum, until at last the whole elevator joined in open song:

We gather together
To ask the Lord's blessing.
He chastens and hastens
His will to make known —
The wicked oppressing
Now cease from distressing
Sing praises to His name,
He forgets not His own.

"A strange sense of assurance grasped the group," writes my friend. "We had the consciousness of everlasting arms underneath."³

What is the brave way to be scared? It is to acknowledge that to be human is to be in danger. Because of that, it is to live dangerously by design not by default, expending our energies in the direction of life's greatest rewards and not away from life's risks. But beneath and beyond all this: it is confidently to commit our bodies and our souls, our sense of status and significance into his hands; assured that in or out of the promised land we belong to the Living God:

Sing praises to His name,
He forgets not His own.

³ Carl Michalson, *Faith for Personal Crises* (New York: Charles Scribner's & Sons, 1958). Used by permission.

$E=MC^2$

Tired with the husbanding of energy:
Saving, to spend; spending, to save enough
For small delight when all the chores are done —
And always running short — now I would rough
Out this formula: As if the sun
Alone could multiply hulk-flesh to be
Residual power like that of coal or grass.
Is there no other light to factor mass,
Illuminated by divinity?

Given divine love, the essential light,
And human love, incarnate light divine,
So love by love, so light by light is squared,
So spirit in the flesh is made to shine,
So mass by light is multiplied, declared
In energy transcending our own mite
Of strength. Love acts on flesh for the release
Of power, divinely squaring to increase
The finite human by the infinite light.

SARA DEFORD

Grant us, O God, the will to draw
All mankind within the compass of our thought,
To receive our brothers
Of every creed as equals,
To share their truths,
To respect their prophets,
To grasp their wisdom.

Redeem us from the snobbery
That has caused us to
Live shut off from the universal
Revelation of mankind's search for thee.
In isolation and pride
We have boasted of our partial grasp
Upon the age-old, widespread unfolding
Of thy truth to questing human minds.

How feeble and fragmentary
Are our insights.
Grant us humility
And wider horizons
To share with rather than
Proselyte our brothers.
Through tolerant and inquiring minds,
Through graciousness and mutuality,
May we learn to live and work with
Our comrades of varying creeds.

Through new eagerness and effort
May we come together for brotherly
Conversations and united planning
To form a united religions organization,
And stand together for
Justice, liberty, peace and fellowship
For people in every corner of thy globe.

—Robert M. Bartlett, *First Congregational Church, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.*

(This prayer will appear in Dr. Bartlett's book, *With One Voice: Prayers from Around the World*, to be published by Thomas Y. Crowell this fall.)

For the Blessing of Work

FOR the blessing of work we thank thee, O God. Never a curse unless accompanied by the sin of self-will and rebellion, thou didst place our first parents in the garden to till it and make it blossom as the rose. Give us the joy of creative activity, skill for our hands and cunning for our minds. May we ever know that we are laboring hand in hand with thee to provide for the needs of thy earthly children. Teach us in so doing that there is a sacrament in work that has thy divine benediction for we remember the words of thy Son, Christ Jesus our Lord, "My Father is working still, and I am working." Amen. —Hillyer H. Straton, *First Baptist Church, Malden, Massachusetts.*



Prayer for All Women

May each of us cherish the unquenchable
spark of divinity
which burns in every being,
the blessing and the hope of us all.

May each of us nurture that spark
with concern for humanity,
with tenderness for the young
and the old and the helpless,
with acceptance of the work
that is women's and
with self-discipline through
every hour of each day,
until the spark becomes a flame.

May each of us feed that flame
with deeds of compassion,
with mothering for the lonely
and the afraid and the unwanted,
with acts of mercy, and
with sacrifices of personal luxury
for the feeding of the multitudes,
until the flame consumes all that
is dross and unworthy within us,

Enabling us to walk forth on each journey
of our every day
mantled with purity,
glowing with love, and
wise with understanding,

That as far as all our arms can reach forth,
all our eyes can see, and
all our spirits can flow out,

We may spread healing and beauty and
freedom and holiness
across the breadth and length
of the bitter earth. Amen.

—Constance MacMillan, *Belmont, Massachusetts.*



Prophecy and Reconciliation

By R. Franklin Terry

THERE are crimes of passion and crimes of logic," says Albert Camus at the beginning of *The Rebel*. He reminds us that Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* would kill everyone on earth in order to possess Cathy. This is crime of passion. Today crime is logical, that is to say, rationalized by doctrines (nuclear deterrence, massive retaliation, national security, "just" war, *et al*) and undergirded by science (nuclear, bacteriological, chemical warfare).

The Christian church stands on the boundary line between its visible and invisible functions — between its institutional, structural arrangements and its basic cultural and spiritual involvements in the human community. This second "invisible" aspect of the church is now confronted with unavoidable alternatives of ultimate concern and commitment. What has the church to say to this age of logical crime?

There are two fundamental insights of the Judeo-Christian tradition which may provide direction for a critical and creative message of the church to our age: one is the pivotal doctrine of the Old Testament — prophecy; the other, the culminative insight of the New — reconciliation.

The words "prophecy" and "protest" are closely related. Both contain the element of rebellion in the presence of decadent social, political or religious conditions. Both are associated with the cultural and theological history of religion. The important difference between these terms is that prophecy implies or predicts outcomes; protest is a reaction against social, political and religious immorality expressed, for example, in beatnikdom. Prophecy contains a conscious element of hope; protest is usually clouded in despair.

At the same time, prophecy is deliberately and realistically pessimistic, for it functions through the use of symbols of destruction and chaos to warn the

people of impending disaster should present tendencies of conduct extend too far. Today there are signs of impending disaster: the symbol of contemporary prophecy might well be the mushroom cloud and the language could even be that of the ancient Jeremiah:

A lion has gone up from his thicket, a destroyer of nations has set out; he has gone forth from his place to make your land a waste; your cities will be ruins without inhabitant. (Jer. 4:7)

Such prophetic realism is accentuated by the knowledge that it is not Jerusalem we would lament, but the world and its civilizations. And the terror of this symbol is multiplied by our recognition that it points to a present reality — a haunting remembrance of August 6, 1945; an irradiated rain which will continue to descend upon us for generations; a stark awareness that in an instant the crime of Hiroshima may be re-enacted on a world-wide scale.

The protest of the church is against this ultimate idolatry to Mars: the prophecy of the church is the predicted certainty for a civilization which worships insanely at the feet of these gods of the End — Titan, Atlas, Polaris.

The church, speaking prophetically in the present moment, must remind us continually of the twenty-four-hour threat of nuclear war. We should never be allowed to forget this or to put it out of our thinking for one minute, so long as the danger persists. The facts of modern warfare should be dealt with often from the pulpit. The possibility of nuclear war is not considered by most of us to be a real and imminent threat. We are numbed by comfort, clergy no less than laity. We have no living recollection of cities laid waste by saturation bombings; of human suffering multiplied a million-fold; of seeing the things we cherish and the people we love disintegrated before our eyes; of endless, gnawing hunger in our stomachs. We have experienced these remotely, to be sure, by watching our own go down to the sea and sail away in ships and waiting sometimes in vain for their return; or we have tasted it personally by having been ourselves those who have done

battle. But these are not a part of our *national* experience and seem remote and unreal.

I recall a remark, symptomatic of this fatal naiveté, made by a woman sitting behind me in the theater following the closing scene of the movie "On the Beach." She exclaimed breathlessly, "My God, if anything like that happened, it would scare me to death!" The implication was "Horrible! but impossible, thank God!" The warning of the church must be "Horrible! and probable! unless. . . ." Let the church serve us up a bit of the "prophet's scorn," as Rauschenbusch put it.

Such a prophetic voice from the church would aid us not only as a warning and a protest against our present devotion to war-making in the guise of peace-seeking, but also as a constant stimulus for renewed personal and social commitments which enhance the total human community. Prophecy can aid in bridging the cultural and ideological chasms which divide human groups by reminding us that all reasons for existence would be wiped from the face of the earth, including those which tend to separate men into national and political and religious camps. If we were certain that all-out world conflict would inevitably mean the destruction of our way of life, with no possibility of national survival, then perhaps we might begin to channel our energies in the direction of a reappraisal of our involvement as a people, as an economic system and as a government in the total life of the human race.

Prophecy in the church will serve us, then, not only by reminding us of the grave risks — or perhaps we should say the certainties — inherent in policies which sustain a peace with terror, but also by pointing to the human community which the church attempts to judge and to preserve at the same time. This "judgment in order to preserve" is the unavoidable tension of a religion which endeavors to mold its culture — to leaven it — and not merely to reflect it.

If we have not already passed the point where we can think clearly about such heavy matters, the church may turn its people into fresh channels of being and acting. It rests upon the

R. FRANKLIN TERRY has served as associate minister at Christ Methodist Church, Denver, Colorado, for six years. A graduate of Baker University (A.B.) and Iliff School of Theology (Th.M.), he is currently completing work on a Th.D. degree in the department of Christian theology at Iliff.

Standardized Parish Paper Service



DID you ever feel the thrill a pastor experiences when his church is moving ahead rapidly, money is pouring into the treasury, church packed at every meeting, and a nice crowd out at the mid-week service?

Do you know that if you are going to be a success as a church manager you must take advantage of modern church methods? Are you aware of the fact that nearly all progressive ministers publish parish papers?

A parish paper competes with the movies, the automobile, the Sunday newspapers, with golf, and beats them decisively. A parish paper fills empty pews and keeps them filled.

Instead of sitting still and waiting and hoping that enthusiasm will grip the hearts of the members why not take the initiative, step out and resolve that your church must go forward?

The first step is to establish a parish paper, and if you want the biggest value for your money, use our service. We are the originators of the parish paper idea. We standardize — mass production makes it possible for us to give you a better parish paper at a lower price.

HUNDREDS of churches in every State in the Union and Canada now use our co-operative service, and all testify that a parish paper is the best means of building up a church and helping the pastor in every line of duty.

Send Coupon for Free Samples and Full Particulars

FOR SAMPLES, PRICES AND FULL PARTICULARS REGARDING OUR SERVICE AND THE HELPFUL SIXTEEN-PAGE ILLUSTRATED PARISH PAPER MANUAL CONTAINING DETAILED EXPLANATION OF PUBLISHING PROCEDURE, FILL OUT AND MAIL THE COUPON.

Do it NOW! No obligation, of course.

**The National
Religious Press**
523 Ottawa Ave.
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

USE THIS COUPON

Please send The Parish Paper Manual, sample parish papers, and full particulars regarding your Standardized Service.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

TP _____

State _____

present generations of churchmen to plow new furrows of service for the church, to fashion new wineskins for the new wine of international community — *Weltgemeinschaft*, if you will!

The ministry of reconciliation works from the assumption that human beings share certain common values and longings, and it points us toward a reaffirmation of these. At the present moment we are all targets for the kind of hatemongering which conjures up distorted images of our foes, casting them into inhuman stereotypes. We have only to recall our intense hatred of "Krauts" and "Japs" twenty years ago, in contrast to our present relationship with Germany and Japan, to see the absurdity of our blanket hatred of the Russians and Chinese today. This hatred is often part and parcel of our "officialese" (which seems to be changing somewhat with the new administration) and comes dangerously near to being a requirement for "loyal" Americans.

From our pulpits we must be encouraged to think on the values and purposes and objectives which we share with other peoples. We and our adversaries will agree, for example, that the use of war as an effective political tool is obsolete, because it means mutual suicide. In this regard it would be well for us to be pulling for the Soviet government in its ideological conflict with China. In November, 1960, the Kremlin succeeded in its revisionary aims relating to the doctrine of the inevitability of war. "Peaceful coexistence" rather than "war with the capitalist imperialists" is now part of the communist manifesto. We share with our political antagonists the objective of a world in which the benefits of materials and technology may be shared by greater numbers of people. We share common purposes in our exploration of space, in the fight against killer diseases.

We share the satisfactions inherent in the *beaux-arts*. How else are we to explain the acclaim given to Richter in this country and Cliburn in Russia? of Shostakovich in this country and Bernstein in Russia? of Dostoevski in this country and Jack London in Russia? This cross-fertilization of cultural influences helps us to penetrate beneath the caricatures of the cold war. It is at least a sign of hope that the peoples of opposing power blocks share some of civilization's richest values and meanings, although we do not thereby underestimate our political differences. We are daily reminded of these. But we may certainly discern, through the spectacles of shared value experiences, the difference between people and propaganda.

A second valuable function of the church's ministry of reconciliation would be to effect a mental shift toward a greater tolerance for difference. The inability of the American mind to tolerate difference is one of the more obdurate stumbling blocks on the road to peace. The world is now rapidly emerging from an era in

history which was largely determined, fashioned and ruled by the European Christian and his American descendants. We are witnessing revolutions which are throwing off "Christian" overlordship. Certain remnants of this era are rapidly approaching an ultimate confrontation (South Africa and Latin America, for example), hastened by our rigid intolerance and our exploitive political and economic relations with these people.

But tolerance is only a keystone in a much broader and inclusive *philia* which embraces those who would otherwise be strangers. Christian theologians, working in the context of a world community, must, with all respect to their concern about the "ultimate and final revelation," see their task also as one of constructing a theology which is not exclusively concerned with the perplexities and anxieties of Western man. The rise of Buddhism and Islam has become a symbol of mass protest against a static and unimaginative Christendom.

As an agent of reconciliation, the church may lead us into active involvement in this broad human community, showing us that over against our share of blame for the miseries of our era, we share also in its only hope. President Kennedy's proposed Peace Corps would be a stride in the direction of our involvement in the human community. There is no alternative to such involvement. The tragedies of human sickness, poverty, ignorance and hunger belong to us by the very fact that we are able as a society and as individual people to do something about them. The revolutions of the present day — which are not alone political, but economic and cultural and spiritual — belong to us who ushered in the age of revolution. We cannot stand aloof from the goings-on in the world while mumbling about low standards of living and ignorance, allowing our abundance to spill over into inert pockets of storage while our technicians provide us with an increasingly introverted affluence. Our task is one of helping in the creative emergence of a world community, not in the old sense of "kingdom of God" utopianism, but from the recognition that our period of "enlightenment" has brought forth religious, cultural, political, economic and social artifacts which are not to be polished and flaunted as symbols of superiority, but shared with the people of the world.

To a shameful degree the American church has become at once the nation's tranquilizer and its sanction for a war which will leave God without any worshippers at all. We know that the churches alone are not going to save the world, but neither can they be content to speak sublimely about the next world while giving this one over to the lions.

There are encouraging signs today of an awakening of the church and its confrontation with the realities of the present day. The church is in-

creasingly asking its people to become better informed about the issues of the social and political order. This is done in part through local committees on social action; through church sponsorship of the Great Decisions program in many cities; through the participation of ministers and laymen in action for peace in such citizens' organizations as the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (with its many local chapters), the Campaign for Disarmament, the Campaign for a World Constitution, local United Nations agencies and such world-wide movements as the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

In this age of logical and ultimate crime, there can and there must be a greater vision in American theology taking shape in a church which is necessarily critical of its culture, rigorous and imaginative in its social and political demands, broad in its temper and interests, seeing in man and history the most tragic and at the same time the most creative dimensions of life; not blind to either man's wickedness or his nobility. In this century the thinking of the American church has learned temperance and realism from the stern correctives of the European and American classicists, but these insights must now be coupled with our latent idealism which affirms that the power of redemption is at work in our midst, that there can be a future and that man may have a place in it — if he will help to create it.

Pulpit Calendar

- Aug. 6 — The Transfiguration.
- Aug. 13 — 12th Sunday after Pentecost.
- Aug. 20 — 13th Sunday after Pentecost.
- Aug. 27 — Festival of Christ the King.
- Sept. 3 — Labor Sunday, 15th Sunday after Pentecost.
- Sept. 4 — Labor Day.
- Sept. 10 — 16th Sunday after Pentecost.
- Sept. 17 — 17th Sunday after Pentecost.
- Sept. 24 — 18th Sunday after Pentecost.
- Sept. 24 — Oct. 1 — Christian Education Week.
- Oct. 1 — World-Wide Communion Sunday.
- Oct. 8 — 20th Sunday after Pentecost.
- Oct. 15 — Laymen's Sunday.
- Oct. 18 — Churchmen's Rally.
- Oct. 22 — World Order Sunday.
- Oct. 29 — Reformation Sunday; World Temperance Day.
- Oct. 31 — Reformation Day.

The Preacher on Television

By Michael Daves



MY TELEPHONE rang. A voice on the other end said, "Hello, I'm calling for the Council of Churches. You're probably familiar with our daily devotional program, 'Light for the Day.' I wonder if you could give the devotions for one week next month?"

Sooner or later, every preacher is likely to be faced with the prospect of appearing on television. Many television stations give public service time to councils of churches for devotions. Panel discussions on TV often include a minister. The pastor himself, realizing the potential of the media for communicating the gospel, may have his own program.

Today's preachers are challenged to be effective communicators via a media which is strange to most of them. Usually, the average pastor's only acquaintance with television is as a listener-viewer. Yet television communication is a difficult art to master. It does not follow that the effective pulpit preacher will make a good television personality any more than it follows that a good automobile driver will be able to fly an airplane. Aware of this fact, the nation's seminaries are emphasizing courses in religious television. Workshops are also held for postgraduate training in the field. Still, many preachers will not be able to profit from these opportunities. And perhaps your telephone is ringing right now with an invitation to be on television! What to do is the big question.

First, you will prepare your message with complete thoroughness. Keep it simple and direct. Before you decide what you are going to say, get in mind to whom you are going to say it. A diversified picture will emerge. You will speak on television to the unchurched and the churched, the uneducated and the educated, the interested and the indifferent, the friendly and the hostile. If your listener-viewers are to understand your theology, you will avoid using theological terms. Some of your listener-viewers might think

that regeneration is a new device on a Polaris missile. Use illustrations that show people in everyday situations. Use action verbs and picture words. Avoid long, involved sentences that are easy to get into, but difficult to get out of. Television preaching, like no other preaching, demands that you "begin with a climax and end with an earthquake." You no longer have the advantage of Sunday morning—an attentive congregation. Some in your TV audience have their sets on only because they are waiting for another program. Your audience may be eating breakfast, or glancing at the newspaper, or ironing, or talking. Their attention is divided. Only a concise, colorful and clear presentation can hope to capture it.

In preparing your remarks, remember that your time will be severely limited. If you have a five minute slot, it means that you have only about four minutes air time. The rest of the time is devoted to introducing and closing the program, for station identification and for commercial announcements. And this is television. Unlike Sunday morning when you can run overtime comfortably, you are a slave to the clock. There is split-second timing. So, after you've completed your manuscript, you should read it aloud with a close eye on the clock. Study your manuscript carefully. To have it well in hand on the air, you must have it well in mind beforehand.

You should arrive at the television station at least fifteen minutes before the telecast. This will give you an opportunity to acquaint yourself with the set and receive unhurried directions from the production staff.

One of your biggest problems will be that you are speaking to an invisible audience. Instead of faces looking into yours, there is only the three-eyed monster known as the television camera. Thus, you create your own audience. If you fail to do this, your sermon will not hit home. We speak to persons, not to cameras! See mother and dad, brother and sister, the old folks. Speak to *them*. Imagine that you are sitting in their living room and talking to them as their friend.

Such an image will guide you in the delivery of your sermon or devo-

tion. You are a guest in someone's home. So, don't moralize. Don't raise your voice. Don't be dogmatic. Don't use too many gestures. Balance an imaginary cup of coffee on your knee, and talk in natural, relaxed tones. Be pleasant. Don't frown—even if the lights do glare. The gospel is good news, not bad.

It may seem elementary to underline, *Look at the camera*, yet many television personalities have bad cases of wandering eyes. Some television stations place a monitor on which you may see yourself off to one side of the set. The temptation is always to sneak a look at yourself. If there is no monitor, you are tempted to look at the floor man or in the direction of the control booth. When you look to one side, the listener-viewers wonder what you are looking at and their attention is diverted. There is no need to look away from the camera. The cameraman receives orders from the director and conveys them to you. He will signal you when to begin and he will also give you time signals as the program progresses.

The need for "eye-contact" on television cancels out excessive use of notes. Of course, looking down at notes is never good preaching. As the old saying has it, "Paper is a poor conductor of heat." This is especially true in television preaching. Facial features are very prominent on the screen. It is irritating to the listener-viewers when the preacher is looking down all the time. "What's he looking at?" they ask. If notes are absolutely necessary, print the points in large print on a card and ask to hang it on the TV camera. Although these devices are called "idiot cards" by some in the trade, they nevertheless can save the preacher from breaking "eye-contact" while refreshing his memory.

Watch your voice, too. For better or worse, we are wedded to our voices. However, all of us can improve what we have. Practice listening to your voice on a tape recorder, if possible. The tendency is for the voice to become higher pitched when you are nervous, as you may be on television. So, concentrate on keeping it moderately pitched. Take several deep breaths and yawn. This will help you

MICHAEL DAVES worked in radio and television and also as a journalist before entering the ministry. He is now minister of First Methodist church, Addison, Texas.

*Famous Church Buildings in America—
number 10 of a series*

Acoma Mission

ACOMA, NEW MEXICO



In New Mexico's bloodiest battle, the Spaniards wrested a sheer-walled, 400-foot mesa from the Indians. Three decades later, Father Juan Ramirez scaled this island-in-the-sky to build Acoma Mission in 1629. Still used for worship, it is said to be the oldest European structure so close to its original form in the United States.

For a handsome 11x14 lithographed framing print, send 25¢ mailing cost to Ministers Life. Ask for No. 10 of this series.



MINISTERS LIFE and casualty union

Ministers Life Building, Minneapolis 16, Minn.

Serving as the world's largest association of clergymen—specializing in "select risk" life insurance for the clergy and their families.

relax. During the program, be sure to regulate your breathing carefully. If you swallow air like a half drowned man, the television audience will be drawn from *what* you are saying to *how* you are saying it.

Don't forget your enunciation, either. Make sure that you don't lose final consonants or go to the other extreme and overemphasize them. Avoid slurring. Don't speak too rapidly. The television audience is ac-

customed to high quality enunciation. The preacher cannot afford to give them less. Finally, when the telecast is concluded, don't forget to thank the production personnel for their help. You might even ask the director for criticism.

As we study and practice the principles of television production, we can "show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed" even on TV.

Book Reviews

THE BIBLICAL EXPOSITOR: THE LIVING THEME OF THE GREAT BOOK. VOL. I: GENESIS TO ESTHER; VOL. II: JOB TO MALACHI; VOL. III: MATTHEW TO REVELATION. *Consulting editor, Carl F. H. Henry. A. J. Holman Company. Each volume, \$6.95.*

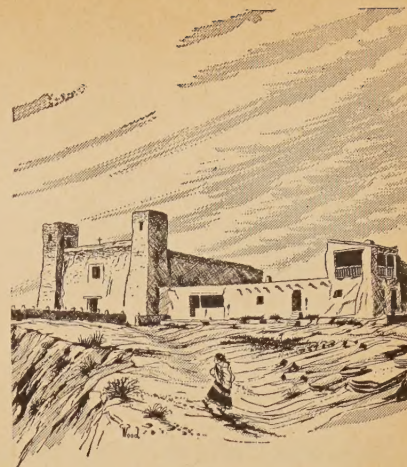
THIS publication, the work of 65 authors drawn from many denominational sections, was sponsored by the Holman Company to mark its 160th anniversary. It is designed to offer an exposition of the Scriptures in popular form, and according to the editor aims at "fixing its attention on the enduring message of the books, rather than losing itself in literary and critical disputations."

Wilbur M. Smith illustrates the enduring influence of the Bible by garnishing the first of three introductory chapters in the first volume with encyclopaedic information on the fortunes of the Book of Exodus in biblical, ecclesiastical and literary history. Francis R. Steele follows with a sketch of the theme of redemption which he finds threading the entire Old Testament. The exposition of the Old Testament consumes two volumes. A prefatory article precedes each of the four divisions adopted by the editor: Mosaic, historical, poetical and prophetic. David H. Wallace concludes the second volume with a discussion of the period "Between the Testaments." The third volume covers the New Testament writings in their traditional order. The major introductory article, by Julius R. Mantey, discusses New Testament backgrounds and the formation of the New Testament canon. Frederick F. Bruce and Everett F. Harrison introduce respectively the Gospels and Epistles.

The apparent bulk of the work conceals the fact that most of the exposition consists primarily of brief digests of the content in the various divisions of the biblical books as broken down by each of the contributors, with some attempt made to suggest sequence of thought. The reader who hopes to find help on specific problems of interpretation will in most cases be disappointed. Whereas Philemon and Jude together receive 11 pages of de-

tailed treatment for 40 verses, problem-loaded Ephesians comes off with a scant 9 pages for 155 verses! Individual words and expressions occurring in the Psalms merit entire paragraphs (e.g. Ps. 40:6), but James 2:14-26 is shrugged off with 12 lines of type, and even a part of this slight exposition might well be debated.

We are not in favor of overly stringent editorial policies for works of this type, and Editor Carl F. H. Henry has done his job well, but more consideration should have been paid to the relative amount of space accorded critical discussion. Scandinavian views on the New Year festival are aired in the exposition of the Psalms, but no word is said about the problem of authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, and 2 Peter is ascribed to the Apostle Peter without so much as a scholarly blush. Detailed isagogical discussion is not necessary in a work of this type but the reader is entitled to be informed about the conclusions reached by a large percentage of biblical scholars rather than have minority viewpoints presented as a final word on the subject. The following *non sequitur* will illustrate what we mean: "The name of the author [of Genesis] is not stated, but since it so evidently prepares the way for the story of the Exodus and the great events which follow, it is proper to assume that it was written or compiled by Moses," (I, 43). Oversimplifications of this sort turn up repeatedly. Thus the Song of Songs is declared "undoubtedly . . . canonical Scripture in the time of Christ," (II, 112; but see G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, I Cambridge, 1954, 242-44); a misleading antithesis of "factuality" and "allegory" is suggested in the discussion of Gen. 3 (I, 57); the Book of Daniel is denied a pseudonymous authorship on the grounds that "there is no evidence that the Jews ever issued under a pseudonym a book claiming to be a revelation from God, dating it centuries earlier than the time of public presentation" (II, 262), this despite the acknowledgment in another part of the same volume that Solomon is not the author of Ecclesiastes, and in the face of intertestamental pseudepigraphical apoca-



Famous church buildings of America series—#10: ACOMA MISSION, Acoma, New Mexico

HOW DO MINISTERS SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO COLLEGE?

A minister's budget seldom allows much college financing from home. Most ministers' children who cannot qualify for scholarships must work while they go to school—or forego college.

Saving for a child's education is arduous. It means a substantial sum must be set aside from each year's salary during the period the child is growing up. On a minister's salary and living expenses, such plans are often sacrificed. And scholarships cannot always be depended upon either—they are limited both in number available and the amount they contribute to the overall college expense.

This is why many ministers take out special insurance to set up a college fund—a policy such as Ministers Life College Endowment Policy. Because each premium is a regular billed expense, it must be paid. And as they are paid, they build a growing fund that matures when the child reaches college age.

Most important, because it insures the father, it guarantees the needed funds to start the children's education. If the father should die, the money is held in trust until the child reaches age 18 and is ready to go to college.

The college endowment policy is another special policy for ministers from Ministers Life. Years of experience insuring the clergy have designed it to fit ministers' needs and their budgets.



MINISTERS LIFE
and casualty union

3100 west lake st. • minneapolis 16, minn.

Write to us for insurance help and information.

lyptic. The unity of authorship of Isaiah is made to hang on the gossamer thread of a phrase "the Holy One of Israel," which appears in the 66 chapters of Isaiah 26 times, and only 5 times outside the book (II, 125). The author ignores the possibility that the use of the phrase may just as well reflect an Isaianic school well steeped in the prophet's expression. Similarly, in the exposition on Mark the expositor observes that "to Peter the people in their bright oriental garments on the green hillside looked like beautiful flower beds," (III, 85). The patristic tradition of Peter's connection with the Gospel is used in such a way as to ignore the possibility of Mark's own creative literary genius.

By these criticisms we do not mean to create the impression that all three volumes bear throughout an obscurantist cast. On the contrary, the editor has invited a broad range of critical opinion, which makes rather meaningless the party labels "evangelical" and "liberal" sprinkled liberally and somewhat unevangelically here and there. Sound historico-critical methodology is evident in these volumes as well as in those of so-called "liberals."

On the whole considerably more freedom is displayed in the treatment of the New Testament than of the Old, but Andrew Blackwood in a prefatory article to the poetical books does not hesitate to express the "liberal" conviction that Job is a dramatic poem, a "poetic discussion of an age-long question" (II, 4). In the New Testament we find F. F. Bruce sympathetic to higher critical documentary hypotheses; E. F. Harrison admits the possibility of multiple authorship in New Testament epistles; and E. Earle Ellis reverses the judgment (more aesthetic than philological) of H. C. Leupold on Gen. 6, unembarrassed that Jude employs as his source the Book of Enoch which describes the celestial revolutionary forces engaging with the daughters of men. These three informed New Testament scholars, we might observe, are blazing salutary critical trails in "evangelical" circles and their discussions greatly increase the value of the third volume. In the area of textual criticism there is general agreement in all three volumes that the RSV has the advantage over the KJV in the rendering of many passages. In exceptional instances the reader is confronted with both versions, without any criteria given for a choice (see e.g. on Song of Songs 2:7; II, 107).

Unanimity on all questions of interpretation is, of course, impossible, but the reader of this work will do well to check the Scripture text carefully before adopting some of the hypotheses offered. In connection with Luke 8:22-25 J. Norval Geldenhuys sees the outlines of a cloak and dagger plot: "It is *certain* [italics ours] that the powers of evil, permitted thereto by God, attempted by means of a fierce storm to wreck the boat

containing Him and His disciples, as Jesus lay sleeping the sleep of extreme physical exhaustion. In this way they hoped to overthrow God's whole plan of salvation" (III, 120). The author is reluctant to reveal his source for this bit of inside information on Satanic skulduggery. We can forgive an occasional lapse in defining technical terms in a popular work, but we wonder how the expositor of Acts knows that deuteroamy was "of course," strictly ruled out by Christ (III, 211). The exposition of 1 Thess. 4:13—5:11 is not so much an elucidation of the text as a sounding board for dogmatic presuppositions. In opposition to most scholarly treatments of this text the author subtracts the "Rapture" from the program of events for the "Day of the Lord." This unecumenical hypothesis of a dichotomized eschaton provides the background for the further assumption that the Spirit will not restrain antichrist after the "translation" of the church (III, 347).

Occasional errors in facts unrelated to purely exegetical matters intrude into the discussion. Thus John H. Gerstner apparently lumps all non-Roman Catholics under the label Protestants. If that is the case, his assertion that "the Protestant permits only ordained ministers to baptize" requires modification in view, e.g., of Lutheran practice (III, 212).

The publishers claim that this work is a *must* for "Preacher, Teacher and Student." We would suggest a rephrasing: "This work if used carefully in conjunction with other Bible helps can be of some help to laymen and Sunday school teachers who are looking for a quick overview of the Bible." Most pastors will be familiar with what is contained in these volumes and will require access to more substantial commissaries to supply their constituency with the needed vitamins. The type is large and the format pleasing to the eye. Some of the outlines display the hand of experts in pedagogy (see e.g., I, 400-402). — *Frederick W. Danker, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.*

LUTHER AND THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.
By Altman K. Swihart. *Philosophical Library*. \$7.50.

PROFESSOR Swihart has done a creditable job in writing what can be referred to as a one-volume Lutheran encyclopedia. Beginning with Luther and his teachings, the author traces the development of the Lutheran church in Europe and America to the present day. He also devotes chapters to organization ("Lutherans in America have spent their efforts more in organizational matters than in creating a new theology"), the liturgy, modern trends and the ecumenical movement.

E. E. Ryden of the Augustana Church has said about American Lutheranism: "Nothing is more dead-

ening to spiritual life, even in a local congregation, than for a Christian's vision to reach no farther than the concerns and interests of his own parish. This attitude has to a large degree afflicted all of American Lutheranism in the past. If its outlook has not been parochial, it has at least been provincial. It has been quite smug and self-sufficient. It has manifested little interest, and no concern, in what other Christian communions have been doing. It could see no relationship between its own tasks and theirs."

The historical and sociological reasons appear far more significant than the theological reasons for Lutheran isolationism. Swihart says: "The obstacles confronting these early German and Scandinavian immigrants were not dissimilar to those faced by all early immigrants to America; the rough life on the frontier, a tendency to identify their religion with their native tongue, and too often an intolerance of others. The struggle on the frontier was easily carried over into a battle for the 'right doctrine' by the orthodox, and for a 'consecrated life' by the pietists. Because of persecution, immigrants came with a defensive attitude towards their faith."

Lutheranism has been concerned with strengthening the faith of those within its fold, rather than in influencing culture or politics. By stressing a gospel for the individual, Lutheranism has preserved the evangelical nature of the Gospel. By neglecting its responsibility to society, Lutheranism still speaks in a tongue that much of the world does not understand. Recent Lutheran participation in the ecumenical movement is cited as a sign of hope.

The author succeeds quite well in his goal: "... to put on a large screen the history of Lutheranism; how the devotion and faith of one man, Martin Luther, caught the imagination and hearts of men; how the movement he began became institutionalized and sometimes narrow; and how it has been influenced by cultural and social conditions." — *Robert M. Herhold, St. John's Lutheran Church, Mound, Minn.*

CONTEMPORARY ACCENTS IN LIBERAL RELIGION. *Selected by Bradford E. Gale. Beacon*. \$3.95.

HERE is a frank discussion of such varied subjects as "Is Unitarianism Christian?"—the God concept, eternal damnation, the message of the books of Job and Ecclesiastes, Easter, the function of the modern minister, the race question, religion in our schools, ethics in business, birth control, and there is even a sample of poetry. (Incidentally, you don't have to guess what the writers of the poems are trying to express!)

One would wish, of course, to have a more thorough presentation of these

ital subjects, but that would be out of the question in the compass of a book of 218 pages. The purpose of the various contributors is to give in brief the liberal approach to each of these important and timely topics.

The 24 contributors selected by Mr. Gale to give these "contemporary accents in liberal religion" do not trundle the fence, or write with their tongues in their cheeks. Here you will confront honest, forthright conviction expressed with a clarity that is refreshing.

In these days when so much theological writing tends to play down the responsibility of man and the place of reason in the whole process of individual and social redemption, and when it is asserted that the response of man to the religious challenge is a "gift of grace," it is good for us to look at the other side of the coin. Reading this book will help us realize that there are sincere Christians (whether or not we are willing to admit that Unitarians are Christians) whose point of view differs from orthodox conceptions of Christianity, but whose social passion and devout living often put the orthodox to shame.

The reader will be jarred when he reads "humanism at its best may well have more vitality as a truly religious expression than theism as we know it." All well and good if he is shaken out of his complacency and driven to find a more solid footing for his faith. — *Gerald Watkins, First Baptist Church, Oak Park, Ill.*

PARENTS DESERVE TO KNOW. By G. Curtis Jones. Macmillan. \$3.95.

THIS is a fascinating book, easily read, with lots of good advice about young people, suggestions for parents, information about today's homes and the society in which they are set, quantities of quotable bits, and many, many more quotations from sources as far apart as John Milton and Smiley Blanton, with Louisa May Alcott in the middle, and each chapter is replete with a bibliography. Dr. Jones has undoubtedly known many people, and has known them well, for he knows what their problems are. He knows what goes on in the world, and he has some good advice to give to parents who find that "growing pains" are not limited to the younger set. It is the kind of advice most pastors could give, or ought to, and I think are giving. Surely Dr. Jones has a bigger quotation file and a more pungent way of putting things than most of us have at our command. If we get this book, we will have to decide whether to keep it under the counter and use it as a source of sermon illustrations and gems for our own counseling, or to give it to parents for whom it was written. Used either way, it has some value. — *Joseph W. Baus, First Presbyterian Church, Evansville, Indiana.*

THE PROVERBS FOR TODAY. By Thomas Coates. Concordia. \$2.00.

THIS collection of 58 brief devotional meditations is a demonstration of how easily we preachers fall into mere moralizing when we use texts from the book of Proverbs. Effective sermons, of course, have been preached on texts from Proverbs (I think of fairly recent ones in the published sermons of W. E. Sangster and Alec Vidler), but in using such texts the preacher must reach imaginatively for depths of meaning not immediately apparent in the texts; depths of meaning which are suggestively implicit in the texts. Dr. Coates, except

in two or three places, has not reached for those depths, and his book is, on the whole, what in Scotland is called "a cauld clatter o' morality." — *J. A. Davidson, The Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, Ont.*

CHOIR ROBES

Newest colorfast fabrics available. Write for Catalog A48

E. R. MOORE CO.

268 Norman Ave., Brooklyn 22, N. Y.
932 Dakin St., Chicago 13, Ill.

1641 N. Alessandro St., Los Angeles 26, Calif.
1605 Boylston Ave., Seattle 22, Wash.

An indispensable book
for ministers
of all denominations

INTERPRETING THE NEW TESTAMENT

By JAMES L. PRICE

Written by the head of the Department of Religion at Duke University, this distinguished and scholarly study examines the books of the New Testament, from the Gospel According to St. Matthew through the Revelation of St. John.

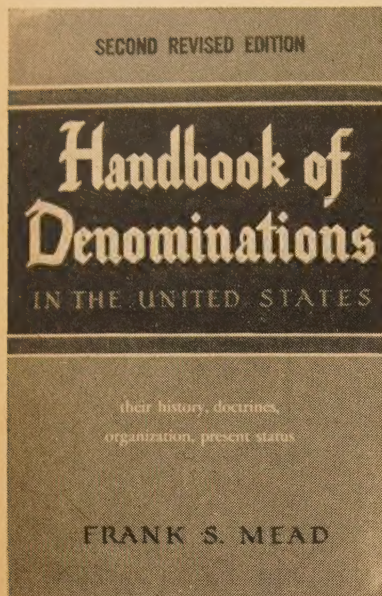
Each book of the New Testament is viewed in its historical setting. Emphasis is placed on the distinctive characteristics and content of each book, showing how each in turn reveals the development of the early Christian church.

Also included in the volume is a study of the beliefs and practices of the earliest Christians and the formation of the traditions concerning Jesus' teachings; a review of Paul's journey and his letters; and an interpretation of the beliefs and community tradition of the church in the post-apostolic era.

Illustrated with maps and photographs.

\$8.50 at bookstores, or from
HOLT, RINEHART AND WINSTON, INC.
383 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N.Y.

Good Ministers Demand Good References



and the standard reference on denominations in the United States has just been revised to give you the very latest information on more than 260 religious bodies. This second revised edition of

Handbook of Denominations In the United States

contains an account of the history, doctrines, distinctive characteristics and present status of each, including the latest information on mergers. A table of church membership in the United States, complete index and bibliography add to the value of this reference by Frank S. Mead. \$2.95

A good Bible commentary must be usable as well as knowledgeable to be of the most service to ministers. That is why the makers of

The Interpreter's Bible

devised its unique working page. Here are the King James and Revised Standard versions in parallel columns; the Exegesis, which has full notes clarifying the text; and the Exposition, which applies the text to the needs of man today. *The Interpreter's Bible* also gives an Introduction to each book, General Articles on the Bible as a whole and on each testament; maps; and illustrations.

The 12-Volume Set,
\$89.50

Single Volume
\$8.75



THE VOLUMES

Vol. 1 — General Articles; Genesis, Exodus
Vol. 2 — Leviticus through Samuel
Vol. 3 — Kings through Job
Vol. 4 — Psalms through Proverbs
Vol. 5 — Ecclesiastes through Jeremiah
Vol. 6 — Lamentations through Malachi

Vol. 7 — General Articles; Matthew, Mark
Vol. 8 — Luke, John
Vol. 9 — The Acts, Romans
Vol. 10 — Corinthians through Ephesians
Vol. 11 — Philippians through Hebrews
Vol. 12 — James through Revelation; General Articles; Indexes

ORDER FROM YOUR
BOOKSTORE

Abingdon Press